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BEYOND ETHNOPOLITICAL CONTENTION: THE STATE, CITIZENSHIP AND VIOLENCE IN THE 'NEW' KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY

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BEYOND ETHNOPOLITICAL CONTENTION: THE STATE, CITIZENSHIP AND VIOLENCE IN THE 'NEW' KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY

by

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This dissertation has been an intellectual quest for me. Like all other quests that a person can get engaged with, it is not completed; it is just the first product of a strong commitment to better understand, evaluate and present the contemporary face of a years-long armed conflict that made the people suffer in my country; regardless of what they call themselves, the Kurds and the Turks, the Zazas and the Arabs, the Assyrians and the Romas…the beloved people of *Türkiye*. I have been constantly and enthusiastically supported by a few people during my determined efforts to come up with a good piece of work that, I aspire, would open further intellectual avenues for me to follow in the coming years. I would like to thank my supervisors Bryan R. Roberts and Mounira Maya Charrad who have invested so much in me and supported me in every step of this project. Bryan has been my supervisor, advisor and mentor since my second year in the graduate school. His energy spins my head, his intellectual brilliance encourages me to keep going in this field and his humbleness, generosity and friendliness always touch my heart very deeply. I am indebted to the education and the invaluable support he provided me. Meeting Maya, being her student has been a great chance for me. She has been very supportive, caring and intellectually nurturing. She has always challenged my intellectual boundaries, motivated me and convinced me that I could do better and better. She has demonstrated tremendous interest in my research. I always appreciate her enthusiastically and convincingly saying "this is going to be a very good dissertation…" at the difficult moments that I found myself in a stalemate; she gently pushed me to keep going. Without Bryan and Maya, I cannot imagine completing my

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BEYOND ETHNOPOLITICAL CONTENTION: THE STATE, CITIZENSHIP AND VIOLENCE IN THE 'NEW' KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY

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This dissertation aims to illuminate the changing nature of the Kurdish contention in Turkey since the 1990s as well as its ubiquitous dissemination among the Kurdish grassroots through examining the repercussions of political violence and the relocation of the grassroots from rural to urban centers. My understanding of the recent internal displacement of Kurdish citizens in Turkey in the late 1980s, but *en masse* in 1990s relates the issue to three overarching intertwined trajectories; 1) the end of the cold war, resulting in the changing nature of political violence and of identity politics; 2) the incursion of neoliberalism and the changing paradigms regarding the nature of state-society relations, resulting in a tendency for decentralization and a decline in the welfare functions of the state 3) the increasing salience of new international concerns-- particularly international human rights rhetoric--and their influence domestically. Against this backdrop, I examine how the

displacement of Kurdish citizens on a large scale has become part of the changing nature of the *Kurdish Question,* and in turn has started to redefine its contemporary face in Turkey in the 1990s. I argue that following the 1990s, the Kurdish question in Turkey has [re]surfaced as 1) a problem of political legitimacy between the state and (Kurdish) citizens affected by conflict and displacement 2) an ethno-nationalist claim, 3) a poverty and social citizenship problem. I analyze these three propositions in relation to three main processes. *First*, I propose that new dynamics have been introduced into the state/center-citizen/periphery relations, through which 'legitimate' Kurdish citizens and secure spaces/geographies are distinguished by the Turkish state in contrast to the 'illegitimate,' 'so-called', 'undeserving' and/or 'suspicious' ones. This process, in turn, brought in question the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the displaced Kurdish citizens. *Second*, previously existing Kurdish contention has turned into an ethno-political issue, which is entrenched among the Kurdish masses mired in poverty in the urban centers of southeastern Turkey. *Finally*, the discontents of neo-liberal restructuring in the form of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion have converged with the ethnic*ized* discontent prevailing among the Kurdish masses in the city centers in southeastern Turkey.

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CHAPTER 1

FORCED MIGRATION AS POLITICAL VIOLENCE

There is a dialectical relationship between democracy, issues of citizenship and political violence. Political violence exists in every stage of democratic consolidation, even in 'western democracies', and is linked to the "changes in rules and patterns of state-society" relations (Unger et.al 1999:4). Political violence further entails (re)articulation between the state and society through negotiation in terms of rights and justice (Jelin 2005). State violence and/or non-state violence disturb the premises of the social contract between the state that undertakes proactive and reactive measures against contention and citizens who experience violence and/or consider the state responsible for the suffering and consequences. Political violence in turn redefines the articulation between the actors involved.

This study aims to illuminate the changing nature of the Kurdish contention as well as its ubiquitous dissemination among the Kurdish grassroots since the 1990s. This new era is peculiar because, on the one hand, political violence has become ever-present in the lives of the millions of predominately Kurdish citizens of southeastern Turkey. On the other hand, pro-Kurdish mobilization and discontent that triggered violence and reproduced by violence in the region have more to do with the repercussions of the post Cold War era than with the determination and capability of

an autonomous pro-Kurdish political commitment[1] (for a parallel reading see for example Yeğen 2006). Though the focus of this study is the socio-economic and political implications of the forced (armed conflict-induced) migrations of the predominately peasant Kurdish communities in the 1990s in Turkey, this dissertation is *not* about the technicalities of forced migration and/or population displacement[2]. It is in fact about understanding a particular form of state-society alienation/antagonism or *contention* at the conjunction of national, regional and international dynamics through an analysis of forced migration as a form of political violence. It is about delicate sites of power struggles where state-society relations break down and are transformed into something that goes beyond nation-state boundaries.

This dissertation is also about the limits of citizenship in a multiethnic society, Turkey, in which ethnic differences are not officially recognized as a means of distinguishing between citizens[3] and social, political and economic dynamics politicize ethnic cleavages in a radical way as do state practices of inclusion and exclusion. This dissertation is most importantly about a powerless group of people gaining national and international recognition, and a controversial socio-political

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[1] Even in Iraq where the Kurds have managed to create a *de facto* autonomous state owing to the propitious global conjecture shaping with the end of the Cold War.

[2] I acknowledge that there are analytical differences between the terms 'forced migration' and 'displacement' in different contexts-- 'forced migration' indicates the 'involuntary' nature of displacement more assertively and processes of 'population displacement' are more subtle and even may include forms of 'voluntary' human mobility. However, throughout this dissertation, I use the phrases of 'forced migration' and 'displacement' interchangeably since in my particular analysis of conflict-induced migration, the two terms overlap considerably.

[3] In the same way as the case of France where citizenship is based on a civic- rather than ethnic or racial- understanding of belonging to the nation-state (see Brubaker, 1992).

leverage/agency that can be employed in, at times, violent claim-making. This study aims to open for analysis a space that is scantily studied and understood by the theories of political violence, the state and citizenship. In this study, issues of citizenship, international rights discourses and identity politics come to the fore as well as the forces of social exclusion, state repression and political radicalization.

In this dissertation, I examine how the displacement of Kurdish citizens on a large scale has become part of the changing nature of the *Kurdish Question,* and in turn has started to redefine its contemporary face in Turkey in the 1990s. I argue that following the 1990s, the Kurdish question in Turkey has [re]surfaced as 1) a problem of political legitimacy between the state and (Kurdish) citizens affected by conflict and displacement 2) an ethnonationalist claim, 3) a poverty and social citizenship problem. I analyze these three propositions in relation to three main processes.

First, I propose that new dynamics have been introduced into the state/center-citizen/periphery relations, through which 'legitimate' Kurdish citizens and secure spaces/geographies are distinguished by the Turkish state in contrast to the 'illegitimate,' 'so-called', 'undeserving' and/or 'suspicious' ones. This process brought in question the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the displaced Kurdish citizens. *Second*, previously existing Kurdish contention has turned into an ethnopolitical issue, which is entrenched among the Kurdish masses mired in poverty in the urban centers of southeastern Turkey. This process indicates the dissemination of ethnic politicization among the poor local displaced Kurdish population during the

course of violence. *Finally*, the discontents of neo-liberal restructuring in the form of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion have converged with the ethnic*ized* discontent prevailing among the Kurdish masses in the city centers in southeastern Turkey. This final process is analytically different than the second one in such that it refers to the ethnic politicization of poverty, impoverishment, social exclusion and the feeling of injustice and discrimination associated with that status of poverty. These three processes have reinforced each other in the 1990s.

Throughout this dissertation, I illustrate that displacement as a form of political violence not only crystallized the traditional alienation between the Kurdish peasant communities in southeastern Turkey and the central state, but also redefined the parameters of state- (Kurdish) citizen articulation incorporating a distinct ethno-political tone. Violence has turned into a means of articulation between the state and the Kurdish citizens who either supported the PKK (PKK-Partîya Karkêren-i Kurdistan- Kurdistan Workers Party)[4] activities or refused to collaborate with the elements of the state even if they did not support the PKK. State violence in southeastern Turkey to insulate the civilian population from the PKK has functioned as a facilitator for the dissemination of identity politics, and also justified the

[4] The PKK is a previously Marxist-Leninist separatist insurgent organization that has changed its discourse significantly over time, especially after the arrest of the leader of the organization in 1999. They formally laid down their arms in 1999. But the organization continued keeping an armed guerilla force and has started to engage in attacks on strategic Turkish security points since June 1, 2004. The organization is recognized as a terrorist organization by Turkey, US, EU and many other countries in the world.

'Kurdish cause' in the eyes of many citizens with Kurdish origins that affected by violence. Moreover, throughout the course of the conflict, the Turkish army mobilized its resources in order to accommodate the rural Kurdish communities that supported the army operations in the region, meet their needs and provide them with social services (Cemal 2004). Indeed, I explain in this study that state antagonism has not been directed towards the 'Kurds' in the region, but rather towards the 'suspicious Kurds', the 'so-called citizens' and the 'accomplices of the separatist terrorists'.

The affinity between a politicized Kurdish identity and a violent guerilla organization with separatist goals has confused the central state responses and hindered the Turkish state's ability to reconcile with potential PKK supporters among the civilian Kurds starting from the 1990s. As I mention in more detail later on, this rural Kurdish population potentially antagonistic towards the state in the 1990s had been oppressed under the social and economic burden of the Kurdish tribal feudal structures in southeastern Turkey before the armed conflict started in late 1980s and had suffered from *the state's absence* in the region as a social, economic and political guarantor and provider, rather than its presence.[5] Since the local support for the state

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[5] This is an intriguing point that complicates the traditional argument that the Turkish state has been invasive towards the Kurdish population in southeastern Turkey and therefore should give more autonomy to the pre-dominantly Kurdish areas. As reminded us by Beber (2004: 270) "… in many cases the problem doesn't seem to be that the state has too large of a presence in these territories. On the contrary, the state is often too limited in its presence, and in some cases it is limited to a single institution: the military. The key then is to reduce the role played by military forces in these territories, while integrating members of minority groups as equals within state institutions and giving them a stake in the polity at-large." This analytical consideration challenges the demands for decentralization in southeastern Turkey questioning the validity and effectiveness of the proposition that the central state should devolve its administrative, social and political responsibilities to the local vis a vis the

and the army operations has come from the strong Kurdish tribes and their civilian constituency who were concerned about the increasing popularity of the PKK among the local peasant population, ethno-political Kurdish contention around the PKK has also been antagonistic towards the state-friendly Kurds in southeastern Turkey. Violence triggered Kurdish ethno-nationalism among the grassroots, but also introduced new forms of divisions and enmities among the local Kurds.

Previous marginalization, social and political alienation and economic insecurities have been coupled with political violence that the displaced Kurds experienced during the course of displacement in the 1990s including uprootedness, extrajudicial killings, disappearances, detention and torture. 1999 is a peculiar indicative point[6]. Indeed, my research among the migrant communities in the southeastern Turkey has convinced me that identity-based politicization and local antagonism towards the Turkish state is mainly a part of a politics of survival. Many displaced migrant Kurds have developed a politics of survival to make sense of their experiences with violence and to imagine life chances. Socio-economic stability entails political security; and in turn, political security guarantees socio-economic well-being if not today, definitely tomorrow given that the 'rights of the Kurds are

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social democratic proposition that the central state should assume a greater responsibility to guarantee the rule of law, redistributive justice, social equity and welfare in the local/periphery.

[6] The year that the PKK laid down arms after the arrest of their leader in 1998, Turkey-EU negotiations were officially started and the gradual lifting of the emergency rule in southeastern Turkey was started. 1999 was considered as a turning point in Turkey's Kurdish Question as many assumed that the armed and political conflict was over. Following years and developments have proved that the armed and political conflict as well as social tension in the region was far from a quick reconciliation.

recognized' as stated by the majority of my interviewees. It is through politics of survival that many displaced Kurds position themselves within the structural changes that have overwhelmed them and assert themselves sometimes as victims, sometimes as citizens, but in many times as committed supporters of the 'Kurdish cause' and fighters of the 'Kurdish struggle.'

In this study, I do not intend to reduce socio-economic insecurities and political insecurities into each other; I explain that they do not necessarily overlap each other. However, I do think that during the course of the forced migrations, different forms of insecurities have reinforced each other, which in turn contributed to the radicalization of the Kurdish identity and the increasing popularity of the separatist PKK in the region. Ubiquitous state violence as counter violence against the PKK and its supporters together with the deteriorating social, economic and political situation in southeastern Turkey during the course of the armed conflict have deeply affected the lives of the Kurdish masses who tend to articulate their experiences in terms of their 'Kurdish identity' and perceive the violence of the pro-Kurdish actors legitimate, moral and just, appropriate acts of retribution. Identity-based politicization has in turn articulated as ethno-nationalist sentiments with PKK support and sympathy gaining ground among the Kurdish grassroots that are now a part of the city centers they migrated into. As Denich (2003:179) argues ethnic

nationalism provides individuals with a "symbolic and emotional… domain which most acutely links individual survival with the sense of collective destiny…"[7]

When examining political radicalization among the poor displaced migrant communities (particularly among the young Kurds), I show that neither does ethnicity nor poverty and unemployment by itself cause people to rebel against the state violently. My evaluation is in line with Wieviorka's analysis of violence in ethnically mixed societies

> [Violence] does not emerge directly from downward social mobility, or crisis; thus, the riots in the declining urban areas in France or in England, and those in major American cities, are more frequently the immediate outcome of police abuse of power or inadequate legal decisions than of protests against unemployment. Young people's anger and hatred is definitely expressed in a context of social difficulties, but it corresponds in the first instance to powerful feelings of injustice and nonrecognition, cultural, and racial discrimination.
>
> Unemployment and poverty, even when they are a mark of a brutal social collapse, as in the countries of the former Soviet empire, seldom end directly or immediately result in social violence—something we have known since Lazarfeld's classical study on unemployed workers in Marienthal (1993)—but instead nurture frustrations that may possibly be expressed in an exacerbated form of nationalism…(Wieviorka 2003: 119).

In this respect, specific social, economic and political factors come together and reinforce each other. Therefore, the focus of the attention should not be 'ethnicity' but rather the politicization process of ethnicity under a pro-Kurdish

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[7] The same rationale might also be used to explain the rise of rabid Turkish nationalism in Turkey starting from the 1990s when the PKK violence reached unprecedented levels across Turkey spilling over the conflict zones together with the increasing macro-economic instability and deteriorating social equity in the entire country.

political agenda; not displacement as a physical relocation[8] but rather the displacement process as a form of political violence; not poverty and unemployment but rather the ethnic politicization (or ethnicization) of poverty and the feeling of injustice and discrimination associated with that status of poverty; not only a motivation to use violence but also the existence of counter-violence in the form of the Turkish armed forces.

Guiding Research Questions

What are the local processes that accompany the armed conflict and political violence? How did the people on the ground experience what we call 'ethnic conflict' and 'political violence'? How do their experiences relate to what we see as international changes and/or global trajectories that mark the post-cold war era? What are the implications of local experiences with violence of contentious, agitated, disturbed citizens and what are the associated social, economic and political insecurities that affect state-citizen relations and state legitimacy? In order to shed light on these issues, I examine the social and political processes of the conflict-induced displacement of Kurds in Turkey based on field research and observations on the ground in its local context of southeastern Turkey.

There are two main and two complementary questions that this dissertation aims to address in relation to the socio-economic and political insecurities of the

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[8] Thousands of Kurdish villagers have also been displaced due to the development initiatives going on in southeastern Turkey; however, they have been compensated by the state and relocated within the

Kurds that surfaced and became transformed during the course of displacement and its aftermath;

1) What is the role of Kurdish displacement in changing the scope and substance of pro-Kurdish contention and the articulation between the pro-Kurdish elite and grassroots?

2) What is the role of Kurdish internal displacement in changing state-(Kurdish) citizen relations in Turkey in the post-1980 era?

The two complementary questions are:

3) What is the role and leverage of international actors and rights discourses in (re)defining the pro-Kurdish demands as well as the parameters of the changing articulation between the Turkish state and displaced Kurdish citizens especially after 1999?

4) What is the role and relevance of (urban) space in redefining the state-(Kurdish) citizen relations, and in the emergence of new forms of pro-Kurdish demands, expectations and new forms of pro-Kurdish mobilization?

Contextualizing the Research Proposition

Since the early 1990s, the actors in the Kurdish mobilization and the nature of the Kurdish contention have changed. As Yeğen points out "the ideology and the leadership of the Kurdish resistance of the last two decades are totally different from

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legal terms and under the jurisdiction of the rule of law. Their displacement process does not necessarily refer to a dissident 'politicization' process.

those of the early 1900s[9]" (Yeğen 1999: 565). Prior to the 1980s, Kurdish mobilization(s) were limited to elite actions and politics; periodically repressed and/or co-opted by the Turkish nationalist movement (late Ottoman times and the early republican period), Turkish party politics and political clientelism (during the 1940s and 1950s) and left-wing class-based politics (during the 1960s and 1970s)[10]. Starting from the late 1980s, Kurdish mobilization has gained a distinct ethnic tone instigated and organized by groups of students that separated themselves from class politics and resorted to violent Kurdish ethno-nationalist politics under propitious global circumstances.

Particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, pro-Kurdish contention over ethnicity has disseminated among the poor peasant grassroots (and later on among the poor urban forced migrant communities) who had been until that point marginalized not only from the circles of the Turkish state but also from the organized Kurdish elite groups. In the same vein, the social, economic and political implications of the recent displacement of Kurdish peasant communities in Turkey starting from the late 1980s have been analytically different than those of previous forced migrations that many Kurdish tribes experienced symptomatically during the Ottoman times and the

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[9] Kurdish resistance movements in the early 20th century Republic of Turkey primarily aimed to maintain the status quo of the local tribal/feudal structures and religious establishments against modernization and secularization processes associated with the nation-building project of the Kemalist elites. Those movements were debilitated by internal tribal rivalries as well as their inability to initiate a unified Kurdish movement in Turkish territory (or not in the Middle East what so ever). A detailed history of Kurdish resistance movements can be found in Kirisci and Winrow (1997).

[10] For detailed historical analysis see for example Özoğlu 2004, Klein 2001, Natali 2005, Yeğen 1999, 2005 and Kirişçi and Winrow 1997.

early period of the Republic of Turkey as a process associated with nation-state building, political secularization and centralization[11].

My understanding of the recent displacement of Kurdish citizens in Turkey in the late 1980s, but *en masse* in 1990s relates the issue to three overarching intertwined trajectories; 1) the end of the cold war, resulting in the changing nature of political violence and of identity politics; 2) the incursion of neoliberalism and the changing paradigms regarding the nature of state-society relations, resulting in a tendency for decentralization and a decline in the welfare functions of the state 3) the increasing salience of new international concerns-- particularly international human rights rhetoric--and their influence domestically.

I construe the political violence of 1980s and 1990s in Turkey as ethnicization of political violence and the course of the violence as politicization of ethnicity (Brubaker and Laitin, 1998). My analysis contradicts the culturalist perspectives that see the *Kurdish Question* as originating from incompatible ethnic differences in Turkey.[12] Rather, the historical trajectories of the Kurdish Question(s) have unfolded differently in countries like Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey- the country that houses more than half of the Kurdish population in the Middle East (see for example, Kirisci and

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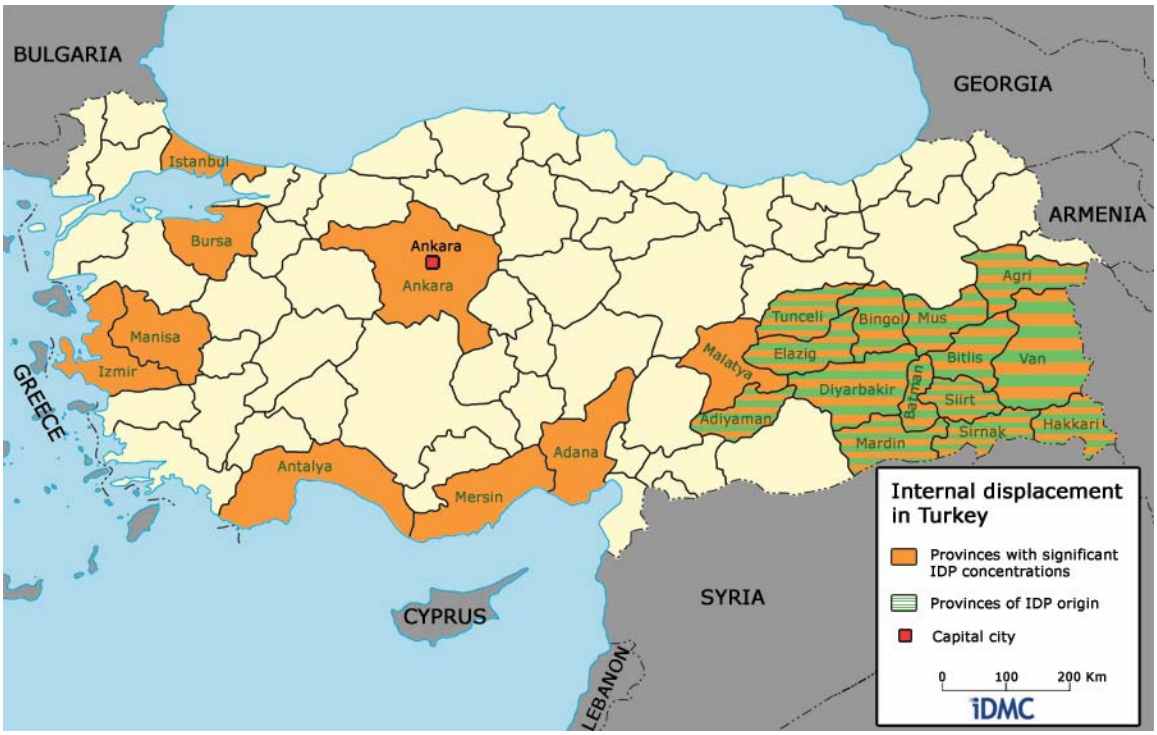
[11] For an analysis of the internal migration of the Kurdish tribes and resettlement politics during the early Republican period see for example Cağaptay 2002.

[12] My understanding of the Kurdish question in Turkey also contradicts with the strand of the previous research (including a recent study by David Romano 2006) that collapses all of the separate forms of the tribal, religious and class-based Kurdish mobilizations and revolts under the category of 'nationalist movement'; and further misses the causes of the emergence of the distinct forms of Kurdish discontent especially after the end of the Cold War, specific to the global political context.

Winrow 1997, see also Natali 2005). My position is in line with the argument that the *Kurdish question* is not something in itself but rather refers to the changing contention among the Kurds under the influence of national, regional and international forces and structures; and is shaped by the means utilized by the Turkish state to co-opt and/or to repress the ever-changing manifestations of contention (see also Yeğen 1999 for an analysis of the *Kurdish Question* in the changing Turkish state discourse between 1920-80).

Map-1

Internal Displacement of the Kurds in Turkey in 1990s



Source: Norwegian IDP Project, 2006

My aim is however not merely to examine a particular form of ethnic politicization (or politicization of ethnicity), but further pinpoint the circumstances specific to the era of neo-liberal restructuring that lead to an ethnic discontent that challenges nation-state formation and state legitimacy. Ethnicity becomes increasingly salient as the core of social problems such as exclusion, discrimination, injustice, poverty, unemployment and also violence. Although the implications of this study may seem to be more applicable to the developing world and/or socio-economically and ethno-politically vulnerable societies than to developed societies, yet my research results are comparable with the various cases of ethnic discontent and precipitate forms of ethnic urban movements in western countries such as the US, Britain, Ireland, Spain, Germany, and France.

The 1990s were interesting in Turkey because not only did political violence victimize the masses of marginalized Kurdish communities in southeastern Turkey through forced migrations, but also because internal migration that had previously worked as an important factor in the integration of the Kurds into Turkish society through the formal economy, the urban class structure and the housing market ceased to be a mechanism of social, economic and political integration (Erder 1995, 1996, 1998; Buğra and Keyder 2003, 2006) . Instead, it turned into a process leading to discrimination, injustice, impoverishment, unemployment and social exclusion in metropolitan centers. This happened not only because the migrations of the 1990s in southeastern Turkey were forced and massive in nature, rather than economic and/or

voluntary; but also because forced migrations were intertwined with the social, economic and political repercussions of neo-liberal globalization, a process that as noted by Wieviorka (2003:117). "exacerbat[es] cultural fragmentation and the radicalization of social identities….and accentuat[es] the frustrations that originate in social inequalities.

THEORETICAL CONCERNS:

POLITICAL VIOLENCE, IDENTITY POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP

In this section I argue that studying a particular aspect of political violence (i.e. Forced migration and/or population displacement) requires synthesizing multiple strands of the available literature. Throughout this dissertation, my interest is to tackle the social, economic and political processes that shape the issues of citizenship, social exclusion and poverty, ethnic identity formation and claim-making in relation to political violence. Therefore, I locate my study in the borderlands where citizenship, identity politics and claim-making crisscross with spaces of radical political contention.

I construe population displacement as a socio-political process embedded into the power dynamics of political violence and armed conflict in a particular locality. Even though there might be economic factors involved, forced migrations are particularly political and/or politicized, and they are 'involuntary' by nature. Forced migrations further inform us about contingencies of the armed conflict associated with the struggles over geographies and resources and the issues of nation-state

sovereignty, citizenship, political and ethnic identity. Accordingly in this dissertation, I construe forced migration as:

> a barometer of social, economic and political struggle in a given place. Studies of the ways in which people's lives are uprooted and homes are forfeited in return for safety provide grounded insights into the otherwise abstract concepts of ethnicity, identity, state-building, and citizenship (Giles and Hyndman, 2004:6).

Research on political violence has focused on organized contentious violent actors; the state(s) vs. the other state(s); organized non-state actors versus the state and/or organized non-state actors versus other organized non-state actors. Basically political violence has been mainly construed and studied in relation to the organized motivated power actors, parties, terrorist organizations, militia groups, guerilla organizations, militaries and paramilitaries etc. What about the civilians involved in political violence *en masse* especially after 1980s since when violence has become ubiquitous in ethnically dissolving geographies? Theoretical attempts are needed to understand social and political agency of civilians in political violence situations, their political experiences and progressive and/or reactionary leverage of civilian experience and political agency for social and political stability and advancement of peaceful democratization processes in conflict geographies. Rather than treated as social and political actors embedded (even though they are already physically uprooted) in their context, civilians tend to be perceived in much policy and academic research as passive actors in face of violence, reduced to the status of 'victims'.

Policy-oriented research even with humanitarian intentions, perceives victimized civilians as impoverished, hungry, sick people waiting for food, medicine and shelter to be provided. In IR (international relations) studies, civilians have been forgotten in attempts to understand diplomatic relations. Anthropological research has done some of the best work in studying the local dynamics of political violence, however, it does not escape victimizing the 'identities' and romanticizing the victimized 'identities', thus failing to understand the politics and economics of identity formation and of civilians' relations with violence. Especially after the 1980s, with the increasing number of uprooted people internally and internationally mobile in conflict geographies, civilians have been treated as 'security threats' not only by the international power actors including the western states and United Nations; but also by political science and some strands of conflict studies research 'assessing' how much instability uprooted civilians could pose for international security. This security paranoia indeed has been the root causes of the UN policy regime towards internationally and internally displaced people in the world (see for example Harrell-Bond 1996 and Hyndman 2000 for a critical analysis).

In a relatively recent research on forced migration, Castles (2003:14) says that "[t]he most obvious reason why we should study forced migration is because it has grown dramatically in the post-Cold War period." However, considering that forced migration is a phenomena beyond our mere understanding of physical human mobility, that forced migration is a form of political violence with implications in

terms of citizenship and nation-state legitimacy, that forced migration has linkages with poverty and social exclusion, that forced migrant groups are political entities with sometimes political claims and antagonistic stances in nation-state politics, there is still dearth of analytical research aiming to understand the social, economic and political implications of forced migration in conflict situations, which seems like a serious void to fill in especially in political sociology research.

In my study, the focus is *internally* displaced forced migrant communities, which makes issues of ethnic identity, citizenship, claim-making and political radicalization even much more pertinent. The actors in question are the 'legitimate citizens' of a state; they are not internationally displaced refugee communities begging for the mercy of the 'host' countries, whose official status is at stake; but rather very 'legitimate citizens' uprooted within their own country largely by their own state. Their needs, concerns and expectations; demands and claim-making; antagonism and contention are engaged with the state with which their affiliation is now in question.

First, I discuss the literature on citizenship. Citizenship literature falls short to understand the radical contention between the Turkish state and many conflict-affect Kurds including the displaced. However, the notion of citizenship helps me understand to what extent state-society articulation could be achieved through pushing the boundaries of Turkish citizenship for greater inclusiveness for socio-economically marginalized and politically alienated conflict-induced migrant Kurds.

Second, I discuss the literature on identity politics and claim-making/politicization which I use to understand the displaced Kurds' political affiliation with the Turkish state through identity politics. Also, predicaments associated with identity politics help me better understand the antagonism and lack of legitimacy between the Turkish state and the contentious pro-Kurdish actors.

Finally, the literature on social mobilization with a specific emphasis on space/geography helps me better articulate the nature of politicization and claim-making in southeastern Turkey by taking into consideration the factor of 'urban space' in a contentious geography.

Citizenship, Rights and Ethnicity

I use the notion of citizenship to understand the changing nature of state-society relations in southeastern Turkey during the course of the armed conflict. As opposed to what otherwise would be thought, displaced population during the course of the violence faced violence and rights violations not necessarily because of their ethnicity but rather because of peculiar concerns traditionally embedded into the politics of Turkish citizenship to distinguish between the 'legitimate', 'loyal' and 'deserving' citizens from the 'illegitimate' ones. After 1980s, there have been introduced distinct ethnic connotations into the state's practices of distinguishing the 'good' citizens from the 'bad' ones (see for example Yeğen 1999, 2004 and 2006 for a critical analysis of the changing nature of Turkish citizenship throughout time). The Kurdish guerilla mobilization of 1980s and 1990s also became transformed into new

forms of social politicization and claim-making on the ground with predominately Turkish military conducted mass displacement of Kurdish communities from rural areas into a complex web of urban relations. Violence indeed rendered the notion of citizenship questionable as citizens and the state started to lose their legitimacy in the eye of each other in face of raising salience of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in southeastern Turkey.

I am particularly interested in the articulation [and/or lack of articulation] between the conflict-affected masses/social actors and the state (Jelin 2005: 191). This articulation can be conceived in terms of citizenship, but as I discuss below, as articulation gets more and more contentious there emerged a need to introduce further theoretical parameters to capture what is beyond the boundaries of citizenship. Citizenship refers to a national identity and belonging. As processes of nation-state building are imposed upon from above by the founding elite, they are also supposed to be supported, complemented and/or resisted by the societal forces from below. Citizenship consolidation and expansion of rights occurs as a product of these sometimes contradictory and sometimes complementary forces from above and below. Citizenship also refers to rights and duties granted to the state and citizens. As societal forces from below could push for further rights and/or redefinition of previous ones, expanding citizenship rights is also a strategy for the state elites to consolidate their status and to control the resisting sectors of the population (Mann, 1987).

Building upon the original work of T.H. Marshall ([1949] 1964), the contemporary sociological notion of citizenship goes beyond the formal rights and duties of citizenship to include "the social relations among citizens and between citizens, the state and its agents" (Roberts 2002:2), and further citizenship is construed as "a conflictive practice related to power-that is to a struggle about who is entitled to say what in the process of defining the common social problems and deciding how they will be faced" (Jelin 1996:104 also see Van Gunsteren 1978). With regard to conflictive forces between the state and citizens, between citizens as well as between the state, citizens and would-be-citizens, claims to citizenship and rights can be defined as struggles (or movements) against the exclusionary mechanisms of modern nation-states and as claims to inclusion into the boundaries of a politically defined notion of citizenship rights as well as access to opportunities available in society (Roberts 2002).

An important strand of research on citizenship and exclusion is presented by the research of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) and Engin Isin (2002). These scholars elaborate on claims to citizenship as processes through which subjects articulate rights-claims and their particular identities. Citizen subjects, in turn become 'political' asserting their excluded interests against exclusionary institutional processes of citizenship. Isin defines 'becoming political' as "that moment when one constitutes oneself as being capable of judgment about just and unjust, takes responsibility for that judgment, and associates oneself with or against others in

fulfilling that responsibility" (Isin 2002:276). However, 'being political' in Isin's terms gets more radical when it comes to group rights with ethnic connotations. Indigenous movements, for example, struggle for inclusion and rights on the same basis with the other citizens in their countries. But they also sometimes struggle for autonomy and reject to connect with the state as it is the case with Zapatistas (see for example Davis 1999).

Kurds in Turkey cannot be treated on the same basis as indigenous populations in Latin America (see for example Yeğen 2006 for a detailed explanation). Kurdish citizens in Turkey have never been systematically discriminated against or excluded from citizenship rights available to the other citizens. Rather citizenship practices have been diverse, complicated and sometimes contradictory in Turkey whenever religious and ethnic groups are involved (Kirişçi 2000, Yeğen 2004; Çagaptay 2006). Kurds have been considered equal citizens and granted social, economic and political rights based on a civic understanding of citizenship similar to the French case. Indeed, citizenship politics has facilitated the voluntary integration and assimilation of many Kurds into Turkish society, economic life and politics since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. A substantial portion of the Kurdish population in Turkey has taken their places in business and politics including the Turkish parliament (Özbudun, 2004). State policies based on 'social

egalitarianism[13]' promised to grant social rights (i.e. health and education services, and social security pension for the employed) to all citizens, and until 1980s contributed to the integration of the Kurds into mainstream Turkish society without any distinct form of institutional discrimination based on ethnicity[14] (see for example Yeğen 2006). Kurds in Turkey have also quite well distributed across Turkey through economic as well as conflict-induced migrations. Though southeastern Turkey is still predominately Kurdish, Istanbul is counted as the major city with the highest Kurdish population in the world which makes territorial pro-Kurdish claims questionable (see for example Kirişçi and Winrow 1997 and Barkey and Fuller 1998 for detailed discussions on this point).

The current trend in rights and claim-making discourses is also deeply associated with the internationalization of these discourses through 'advocacy networks in international relations' that complicates but also facilitates the

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[13] I should note that in practice, 'social egalitarianism' discourse in social policy turned into a form of 'inegalitarian' corporatism' in 1950s, 60s and 70s favoring employed urban populations. Still, free educational and health services were the state priorities and made available to the majority of the citizens. Social egalitarianism in social policy has particularly worked for the Kurdish migrant communities in western urban centers who were relatively more able than the post-1980 migrant groups to integrate with the urban social and economic life and find jobs in the formal sector. Marginalization and exclusion were rather in class terms than ethnic terms until the 1990s. Since 1980s, neo-liberal restructuring has reduced even the inadequate forms of previous welfare provisions provided by the central state, whilst since 2002 a new direction towards a distorted form of 'universal social rights' approach has been adopted by the pro-Islamist government (Buğra and Keyder 2006). I elaborate further on this point later in this dissertation.

[14] As opposed to the religious minorities, Muslim ethnicities are not considered as 'minority' groups in Turkey. In the same vein, Kurds have been welcome in Turkish politics, state posts and even in Turkish army without any discrimination while religious minorities have experienced systematic institutional discrimination at an overt form as they have been excluded from many state posts and military.

negotiation between the state and groups of people including ethnic and religious minorities (Sikkink and Keck 1998, also see Watts 2004 for her work on Kurdish transnational advocacy groups). In this respect, transnational processes of globalization shaped by powerful organizations such as the UN, INGOs and the World Bank have strengthened the leverage of human rights discourses in domestic and international politics, which have also in turn promoted the relevance of citizenship (Roberts 2005: 144, Sikkink and Keck 1998). Scholars like Soysal further argue that internationalization of 'rights' discourses even enables non-citizen social groups such as immigrants and guest workers to engage in claim-making against states using human rights discourses and pushing the official boundaries of the notion of citizenship (Soysal 1994, 1997, also see Kemp et. al 2000). Research on citizenship after 1980s in this respect, goes hand in hand with increasing salience of 'human rights' discourses in understanding state-society relations and demand-making.

The second half of the 20th century has indeed become the era of 'rights' of people against state repression. In the 1960s, rights were defined in economic and class terms by social movements including student and worker activists around the world and in Turkey. In the 1970s, social movements emphasizing economic and class relations were suppressed severely by dictatorships and military coups (1980 military coup in Turkey). International human rights organizations multiplied in the 1970s to protest against state repression and to promote 'human rights discourses'

involving alliances with domestic organizations and initiatives (Keck and Sikkink 1998, Brysk 1998). As Jelin (2005: 185) states "previously, domination or social and political struggles were interpreted in terms of class or national revolutions. The incorporation of the notion of "violations of human rights" was a true paradigmatic shift…"

Starting from the 1980s, in face of decreasing power of class-based polarization, increasing salience of discourses of democracy and identity politics (ethnic, religious and gender), the social and political demand-making has been concerned with oppression of identity-based social groups seen as deprived of human rights and access to citizenship. In my research, I have a contradictory stance towards the human rights discourses, one considers human rights discourses important in oppressed people's quest for justice in cases that domestic functioning of law and institutions make it impossible for citizens to communicate with state agents; second considers human rights discourses alienating and confusing for state-society relations with over involvement of the international actors into domestic social and political tensions that require direct negotiation of the national actors without being subservient to the international interests.

In her insightful piece on human rights, political violence and people's quest for justice in the Neo-liberal context of Latin America, Elizabeth Jelin for example, provides valuable insights about how to understand repressed people's demand for 'truth' and 'justice' after authoritarian regimes are replaced by more democratic

political systems. Her analysis of the 1990s in Latin America (applicable to other geographies including Turkey with similar experiences) disentangles human rights movements into various strands. On the one hand, she takes into consideration the impact of neo-liberal policies on society including impoverishment, inequality, social exclusion and social polarization. On the other hand, she examines how human rights movements perceive past violence today in relation to the claims of "life, truth and justice" with regard to the past. She therefore, points out the dialectical relationship between past, present and future in demanding justice to settle past accounts with a violent state, but also redefining demands "in face of the new realities of inequality, social exclusion, and social polarization….recuperating and integrating the issues of economic, social, and cultural rights within the logic of human rights and citizenship participation." (Jelin 2005: 192).

Jelin's analysis shows us the connections between past repressions and state violence, today's rights demands articulated in human rights rhetoric, and claims to citizenship in face of the increasing burden of impoverishment/poverty, social exclusion and inequalities especially in developing countries.

> At first, the emphasis of the demands was on stopping illegal repression.… the main ideas shifted first toward a claim for "truth and justice," and since then the movement diversified its goals and demands. On the one hand, it demands truth and justice with respect to the past. This has proven to be a key and enduring action, multiplying its strategies and international dynamics (Keck and Sikkink 1998). On the other hand, the human rights movement redefines its demands in face of the new realities of inequality, social exclusion, and social polarization that have been a persistent feature of the 1990s. This strand has been recuperating and integrating the issues of economic, social and

> cultural rights within the logic of human rights and citizenship participation" (Jelin 2005: 192).

Jelin's two-stranded approach to understand social mobilization challenging the state through internationalized rights discourses (human rights in her case) in a neo-liberal era is also applicable to my specific case of the transformation of the pro-Kurdish demand-making in 1980s and 1990s. Indeed, international rights discourses including human rights and cultural rights discourses have been an integral part of the pro-Kurdish mobilization in Turkey after 1980s. Rights discourses have facilitated the PKK-led politicization in the civil domain and have turned into an outlet for expressing pro-Kurdish discontent. However, pro-Kurdish mobilization has failed to integrate issues of economic and social rights into its predominately identity and culture oriented demand making. Pro-Kurdish mobilization in Turkey and also Diaspora has been unable to articulate itself in relation to social democratic, political and class conscious terms with no concrete understanding of the social, political and economic problems of the impoverishing Kurdish masses.

In the domestic arena, too much involvement with identity and culture has hindered the pro-Kurdish mobilization to gain a well-founded ground in politics and civil society in alliance with the social democratic progressive forces in the country crosscutting ethnic divisions. Human rights discourses have actually worked against the pro-Kurdish mobilization in domestic politics and civil society albeit assisted to gather international attention and interest in human rights violations against Turkish citizens with Kurdish origins. International rights discourses have helped to instigate

the ethnic visage of the *Kurdish Question* to come out and mobilize the grassroots, but have not really helped with articulating the real life problems of millions of conflict-affected Kurds in social, economic and political (different than identity politics) terms in a neo-liberal era.

In a parallel vein, I think that multiculturalist formulations aiming to bring the issues of language, culture and identity into the definition of citizenship would not even capture the basic problematiques with the Turkish state's inclusiveness and exclusiveness. Rather, an understanding of civic citizenship should be consolidated and strengthened in addition to institutional arrangements to ensure democratic channels for citizens to seek justice for human and citizenship rights violations (see for example Argun-Ercan 1999). This approach does not ignore the fact that citizens have also the right to claim control over their cultural domain; rather my point is that while cultural freedom is the most basic human right, institutionalization of cultural differences (including religious and ethnic forms) and politicization of ethnicity might lead to deepening social cleavages in a society and not necessarily guarantee social, economic and political stability and security for the citizens (Beber 2004). Parallel to my argument, human rights discourse interestingly has had two contradictory implications for state-society relations in Turkey recently; antagonizing when it is used to support identity-based claims, reconciliatory when it is integrated into demands for social citizenship, civil rights and justice. I explain this further in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Moreover, ‘culture’ when it comes to Middle East should be treated very carefully as it works something quite strongly resistant towards secularization and advancements in citizenship. Charrad’s (2002) innovative comparative analysis of the relationship between the degree of power historically granted to kin-based tribal units in politics and the level of secularization in law offers analytical tools to understand the importance of weakening primordial social ties for achieving secularization in the state system. Her research, dealing with women’s rights in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, is considerably eye opening to conceptualize the obstacles to democratization in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Political relations in many Middle Eastern countries are arranged around primordial identities with substantive amount of power granted to kin, family, tribe, ethnic group and sectarian relations. Charrad’s work illuminates the fact that democratization and secularization is painful and violent if not impossible without dissolving the salience of ethnicity, religion and tribe in politics.

In the same vein, tribal structures in predominately Kurdish areas in Turkey have been a challenge for modernization and secularization project of the Republican state-building. The first historical manifestations of the Kurdish discontent in the early days of the Turkish Republic were upheavals against state centralization project, organized by previously autonomous religious and tribal units. Here ethnic, tribal, sectarian relations cannot be reduced to the notion of ‘culture’ as they indeed refer to political power dynamics, economic relations and interests mainly subjugating, not

liberating, majority of its members especially groups like women subjugated under patriarchal system (a point eloquently reminded by Mojab (2004) in her analysis of violence against women in Iraqi Kurdistan) and/or landless peasants oppressed under tribal/feudal economic relations. Also, identity politics and demands around the notion of 'culture' cannot be justified without taking into consideration the structural inequalities and injustice embedded in 'culture' and identity-based group formations. To be optimistic, one can expect that political turmoil is likely to reveal structural inequalities in a society and provide channels of opportunity to negotiate claims, demands and interests; reconcile conflicts and tensions; and settle past wrongdoings of actors. Turner's (2000) statement can be tested in this study.

> I develop what we might call a conflict model of democratic citizenship. Warfare, occupation, and civil wars can often produce unintentionally the modernizing force necessary to erode gender hierarchies, status divisions, and the presence of primordial associations within the public domain. In Citizenship and Capitalism (1986), I tried to show how migration, social struggles, and warfare can often lay the foundations for advances in citizenship. This model was developed in response to the static version of the sociology of citizenship in the work of sociologists like Marshall. (Turner 2000:36)

Identity Politics and Political Violence

The ending of the Cold War accompanied the emergence of identity politics around the world with ethnic and religious polarization invading the political domain particularly in East Europe and Central Asia; but also in Latin America and Africa. Class-based polarization was rapidly replaced by ethnic and religious politicization, which Mamdani (2005) claims has been subtlety supported by the global expansion of

neo-liberalism and the US led *proxy* wars around the world. Within the last two decades, internal wars have replaced the previous norm of international wars (van Creveld 1991, Holsti 1996; also see Tilly 2002). Leaving aside the substantive international human mobility in 1990s, the number of internally displaced people (called IDPs in the international refugee regime) has skyrocketed by the end of 1990s (Cohen and Deng 1998).

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the United States and the international community encouraged and supported ethnic group leaders in East Europe and contributed directly to the *ethniciziation* of social and political instabilities in the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia, which led to the massacres of civilians in places like Bosnia (Tilly 2002 also see Denich 2003). Memories of ethnic*ized* violence have in turn contributed to new 'collective memories' with collective reimagining of ethnic identities and/or creating new 'enemy-others' to settle accounts that are entrenched in political economies rather than ethnic differences (Volkan 1994, 1997; also see Murer 2002, Tainter 2003).

Civilians have been increasingly involved in a mounting number of intra-state wars and have experienced violence at unprecedented rates through various forms of political violence including armed repression, ethnic cleansing, use of selective migration and forced migration strategies to control rival groups and resistant geographies like Bosnia and Chechnya. Reflecting the domestic political economic repercussions of the restructuring of global power relations, these developments have

been instigated by groups of actors called in the literature 'boundary keepers', 'ethnic brokers', and/or 'cultural entrepreneurs' "who supply its [ethnic conflict] doctrine; and …exploit ethnic solidarities." (Seligmann 2003:135) What is noteworthy to underline here is that identities are political constructions. As Wieviorka (2003:110) reminds us "[g]enerally speaking, identities constitute something new; they are produced far more than reproduced, an invention more than a tradition."

Since the1980s, indeed, it has been impossible to easily disentangle the economic and political processes responsible for ethnic(*ized*) conflict and political violence around the world. Economic transformations, structural inequalities and economic distress are all being reconfigured with other socio-political dynamics in trajectories leading to politicization of ethnicities in a radical way. It is thus difficult to define any conflict as 'ethnic conflict' and violence as 'ethnic violence' due to the existence of structural power differentials entrenched and mainly originating from the unequal distribution of economic resources, assets, services and provisions. Incorporating the *geography* factor, Agnew (2001: 103) notes that "[r]egional resentments are not always simply ethnic". In many cases, the political economy and geography of the conflict introduces parameters and dynamics that are not explained solely by ethnic subordination/domination (Bush and Keyman 1997, Ruane and Todd 2004). Unger et.al (2002) notes in a parallel vein,

> Unequal access to services, favoritism in spending, controls over key assets, and policies creating dependency of one group on another long aggravated tensions among different groups. When disturbed by political change, such tensions often deteriorate into forms of violence that cannot be easily

> negotiated away. Such economic relations help fuel civil wars, as in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia, violent rebel movements, as in Peru and Burma, or violent street protests, as in Guayana and Fiji. (Unger et.al: 2002, p:5)

A focus on identity politics helps me understand the antagonism between the displaced Kurds and the Turkish state—their conflictive stances towards each other that are difficult to reconcile. More than that, I am particularly interested in explaining the problems associated with claim-making around ethnic identity. In order to better understand the changing articulation between the state and conflict-affected Kurdish masses, I disentangle the specificities of the pro-Kurdish grassroots mobilization in order to understand why it has failed 1) to establish social, economic and political linkages beyond their identity-based ethno-nationalist circles and across social groups in quest of *justice* and *peace* in Turkey and 2) to mediate effectively between the state and the discontented masses.

Indeed, the current dynamics of globalization and the changing nature of social mobilization due to the 'neoliberal ascendancy' have caused many students of social movements to question the effectiveness and role of social mobilization in policy making and implementation. As Foweraker (2005) points out, based on his research on Latin America, 'There is no disputing the enormous investment of political energy and imagination in social mobilization. But what political difference does it make?' Despite his cautious stance towards and questioning confidence in the current forms of grassroots mobilization in Latin America, Foweraker acknowledges

the success stories of indigenous movements around collective rights demands in the areas of land tenure, education and political representation.

Many local Kurdish politicians and activists mentioned to me the Latin American 'success stories' with admiration on many occasions. However, so far pro-Kurdish politics has not been able to achieve the same degree of articulation and organization that characterize some of the indigenous movements of the Latin America. Fragmentation based on class, religious sect and political orientation has been the Achilles' heel in any pro-Kurdish mobilization in Turkey since the foundation of the Republic (see for example Kirisci and Winrow 1998). But more importantly, since 1980s, too strong an emphasis upon the notion of 'identity' (particular civic and political engagement with Kurdish culture and language) has hindered the analytical incorporation of other issues, such as social empowerment, political pluralism, social equity, distributional justice and class into pro-Kurdish demands (A problem that I point out in chapter 6 of this dissertation). Also, increasing salience of Kurdish identity politics has also gone hand in hand with increasing Turkish nationalism (see for example Öniş 2000 for an analysis of the rise of Turkish nationalist party politics).

Moreover, identity politics (both ethnic and religious) seems to have a destabilizing impact on the Turkish society and politics. Kurdish identity politics in particular challenges the state rather than relates to and/or negotiates with the state. Grassroots integration into pro-Kurdish politics occurs, I argue, within the same

parameters of identity politics as grassroots (particularly conflict-affected urban migrants) get further alienated from the central state given their experiences with violence and strengthening affiliation with pro-Kurdish organizing in many southeastern city centers. Identity politics, rather than expanding the scope of articulation between the state and society-- as argued by some students of Latin America referring to various nature of success stories of indigenous movements-- works to the detriment of reconciliatory relations between the elements of the Turkish state and the contentious population (i.e. conflict-affected displaced Kurdish population)[15].

Indeed, one can consider the Turkish army's counter guerilla activities and the subservience of Turkish civil politics to military decisions during the 1980s and 1990s as a general nation-state reflex aimed at maintaining the national integrity and territorial unity of the country against separatist insurgents. The violence used was in fact a 'legitimate' force in the eyes of the Turkish state and the Turkish public as well as to certain extent from the perspective of the international law that granted sovereignty to the nation-state over its internationally recognized boundaries. From a

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15 In the same vein, Islamist identity politics also destabilizes the societal balances which have been attempted to be scrupulously balanced by the revolutionary secular ideals of the Kemalist founding elite. Recent pro-Islamist ascendancy in the central government, Parliament and expectedly at the top of the level of state presidency is, what I expect, likely to disturb the secular institutional structures and introduce tension between the secular arms of the state (the military and the state bureaucracy) and the increasing Islamized government and institutions under its control. Institutionalization of Islam also introduces social tension among the citizens creating artificial cleavages such as non-Muslims/infidels vs. Muslims and/or laic/secular vs. Islamist.

theoretical perspective, the violence waged by the Turkish state against the elements of the Kurdish insurgent organization (and later on against the Kurdish civilians) can be conceptualized as a result of the 'unfinished' character of the Turkish state (Yeğen 1999, Agnew 2001) and/or a part of the process of 'state [re]making' (Tilly 1985).

On the other side of the equation, there is violence perpetuated by a non-state actor; and it is much more complicated to understand and explain non-state violence than state inflicted violence. If the proposition that violence is chosen by the non-state actor(s) among different political options to settle a contention with the state and/or other non-state actors is valid, I would agree with Wieviorka's (1999) argument that violence emerges when politicized actors exhaust the other options and are not able to negotiate with the power holders. Some scholars of the Kurdish question including Bozarslan (2000) have also resorted to parallel propositions arguing that the armed conflict was the only option for the insurgent Kurdish actors to follow considering the authoritarian and repressive nature of the Turkish state.

I however, would also agree with the strand of scholarly work that conceives of violence as counterproductive for social and political reconciliation in the long-run. Motives for forgoing and in some cases even refusing to capitalize on channels of peaceful political negotiation should be analyzed critically as pro-Kurdish actors in 1990s, were systematically engaged in *challenging* the premises of the nation-state in Turkey and much less interested in *negotiating* with the power holders. Wieviorka and Bozarslan's stance also does not explain the recent radicalization in the Kurdish

contention among the Kurdish grassroots in face of the lifting of the emergency rule in the region between 1998 and 2002 and the democratic spaces recently opened via EU democratization reforms (An issue that I discuss in chapter 6). Since 1999, democratic openings in Turkey in general and in southeastern Turkey in particular seemed to be in contradiction with the recent upsurge in ethno-nationalism (Kurdish as well as Turkish) and also religiously motivated violence in Turkey. Democracy does not guarantee peace and reconciliation. Do we need new paradigmatic shifts in understanding the relationship between identity politics and violence, especially in the case of Middle East?

The *Kurdish Question* in the Middle East has been so far treated in the literature as a deadly challenge for the national unity of respective states, as if an intractable and irresolvable problem inherited from the partition of the Ottoman Empire by the European powers (see for example Chaliand 1992, McDowall 2004, for a relatively analytical and comprehensive analysis see for example, Kirisci and Winrow 1997). If we follow this logic, the respective states are to try and learn how to *manage* the problem rather than resolve it and/or let the Kurds have their own country. And violence may even seem a *natural* part of the state politics in the Middle East under the same rationale. Critical research has failed to adequately analyze the *Kurdish Question* as a form of non-static contention surfaced in different historical periods with different faces in relation to the structural deficiencies sometimes entrenched in religious and tribal resistance, sometimes in economic

underdevelopment and intra-regional uneven development, some other times in inequality and lack of distributional justice and especially since 1980s in chronically perpetuated regional violence (for a parallel reading see Yeğen 1999, 2006).

Leaving the cases of Iraq and Iran aside due to complications that I cannot discuss here, in the Turkish case, there was a nation-state building and consolidation process going on in the southeast as well as across the country in the early years of the Republic. Contingencies of nation-state formation; modernization and secularization processes that have been pursued by Turkey in the southeast (and also by Iraq and Iran in their respective Kurdish areas to differing degrees), therefore deserve to be taken into consideration. What is further needed is also an examination of distorted forms of economic relations (pre-modern tribal vs. newly introduced modern; feudal landowners vs. landless peasants; intensifying migration patterns vs. growing urban poor) and unequal political power dynamics (tribal chieftains and religious establishments vs. the modern secular nation-state; patronage politics vs. internal Kurdish enmities; growing necessity for middle class and civic consciousness vs. existing primordial forms of civil society arrangements etc.) that emerged out the uncompleted processes of modernization and secularization undertaken by the Turkish state and resisted by the traditional structural forces entrenched in social, economic and political relations common to the tribal system and religious establishments in Turkey's southeast.

And finally, an analysis of the global trajectory developing beyond jurisdiction of nation-states since 1980s; and international developments favoring ethnic and religious disintegration and challenging the very premises of the nation-states around the world should be incorporated in our understanding of the *Kurdish Question* in Turkey. In this respect, theoretical focus has rarely been on how to overcome the structural social, economic and political inequalities entrenched in the countries with Kurdish concentrations where ethnic tension has arisen as a symptom rather than as a root cause.

Escaping the political, economic and social foundations of what has emerged as 'Kurdish Question' might result in reducing the issue to merely a matter of ethnic identity recognition without understanding the root causes of distributive injustice, lack of political representation and power differentials among social groups changing under repercussions of international and global forces. In my understanding, under the circumstances of the end of the Cold War, the same rationale that the Kurdish Question was an irresolvable problem unless Kurds are given their own country has been reinforced. Therefore, an engagement with 'identity' rather than a spectrum of social and political solutions has been forgone as pro-Kurdish mobilization after 1980s has resorted deeper and deeper to an ideal of independent 'Kurdish nation' and the Turkish state has become more and more paranoid and aggressive against any cultural and political manifestation of 'Kurdish identity'.

Pro-Kurdish demand-making beyond a demand for inclusion into Turkish politics and society, involves a demand for recognition of a particular ideologically defined Kurdish identity, which in turn refers to a particular form of self-determination and autonomy. In this respect, since the 1980s, the pro-Kurdish movement and its articulation at the grassroots level through increasing numbers of urban protests especially in the southeastern provinces, but also in western city centers like Istanbul, develop around rigid forms of demand-making, based on 'identity' (a form of mystified Kurdish culture and language at the center as well as the image of the PKK as savior) (I discuss the new forms of pro-Kurdish grassroots mobilization in chapter 6).

The dilemma is that this is a form of identity politicization that excludes millions of mainstream Turkish Kurds who are considered 'betrayers' making the ideal of a unified 'Kurdish nation' even for the Turkish Kurds controversial. It is also ironic that pro-Kurdish identity politics in Turkey engages with domestic party politics since 1980s with formation of ethno-nationalist Kurdish political parties that refused to establish social and political allegiances and create political agendas crosscutting ethno-political cleavages; therefore getting itself more and more marginalized in legitimate party politics. Maybe the most systemic problem with identity politics, in this respect is that it carries the potential risk of depoliticizing and obscuring structural problems and inequalities in society. In order to evaluate the identity and culture based political radicalization among the Kurdish migrant

grassroots, I draw upon Nancy Fraser's analysis of recognition claims. Fraser for example addresses the problem entrenched in identity-based politics and calls it 'the problem of reification';

> Yet many others [recognition struggles] take the form of a communitarianism that drastically simplifies and reifies group identities. In such forms, struggles for recognition do not promote respectful interaction across differences in increasingly multicultural contexts. They tend, rather, to encourage separatism and group enclaves, chauvinism and intolerance, patriarchalism and authoritarianism. I shall call this *the problem of reification*. (Fraser 2003:91-92)

Bozarslan (2004) further points out the dialectic relation between the radical politicization of ethnic and religious identities and violence in the Middle East as follows:

> [E]specially during the last three decades, violence in the Middle East emerged as the product of power relations, authoritarian structures and an absence of integrative social contracts. The criminalization of political, ethnic and sectarian identities and the divisions resulting therefrom have contributed to the formation of a "tragic mind" that perceives violence as the surest provider of justice and hope (Bozaraslan 2004: 15).

Bozarslan seems to be quite keen in pointing out certain outcomes of ethnic and religious politicization including the resorting of ethnic and religious politics to violence and criminal activities, and the formation of a "tragic mind" in ethnic and religious movements seeking justice and peace through violent means. Turkey has indeed been struck by multiple manifestations of 'tragic minds' fed by upsurge in ethnic and religious radicalization. Tragic minds embedded in Kurdish ethno-nationalism as well as Turkish nationalism seem to be further aggravating each other even more than two decades after the starting of the armed conflict in southeastern

Turkey. As another example in point, a similar 'tragic mind' once operated in Yugoslavia in the recent history when Serbs were looking a way out of an IMF tailored economic depression and political corruption (Denich 2003).

There is indeed a need to draw upon some structural forces leading to social tension and transforming it into one form of violence (i.e. ethnic) or another. In this respect, political violence refers to means exploited and employed by the contentious sides to control power positions, people, resources and territories/geographies. This conceptualization evinces certain 'structural' factors entrenched in conflict and violence, but also the structures beyond what we physically define as 'conflict' and 'violence'. Galtung (1996) clarifies this point saying "[c]onflict is much more than what meets the naked eye as 'trouble,' direct violence. There is also the violence frozen into structures, and the culture that legitimizes violence." Cockburn (2004) further illustrates this point by explaining when violence is more likely to exist; "[v]iolence exists whenever the potential development of an individual or group is held back by the conditions of a relationship, and in particular by the uneven distribution of power and resources" (Cockburn 2004:30). We therefore, need to go beyond what seems like 'identity' instigating political violence.

Mobilization and Geography

Political geography research has been interested in the dynamics between space, geography and political processes for a long time. Early scholars of political geography aimed to understand 'the political' (mainly construed as the state)

incorporating the factor of geography in their models (Dahlman 2001). Starting from 1990s (Post Cold War Era), political geography research has taken a more "critical" approach to understanding international relations in terms of inter-state power relations and the political economy of the post cold war era (Slater 1997, Pile and Keith 1997, Agnew 1997, Davis, 1999, Harvey 2000, Miller 2004). Looking at the ground level (non-state actors), after the collapse of the socialist bloc, the previous state-centered approach (in interpreting the political) has been replaced by theoretical inquiries aiming to incorporate non-state directed political movements involving identity concerns (Dahlman, 2001).

Starting from the 1980s, sociologists have appreciated the relevance of space to understanding societal processes (for example Manuel Castells 1983, Davis 1999, McAdam et.al 2001, Tilly 2003, Auyero 2006). In the same vein with the increasing sociological interest to embrace geography in analyzing mobilization and social movements since 1980s, a significant strand of political geography research has switched its focus to the analysis of social movements, 'resistance/opposition' and political violence in relation to the factor of geography (Slater 1997, Watts 1997, Pile and Keith 1997, Agnew 2001, Miller 2004). Recently, there have been intellectual initiatives in Sociology to incorporate space and geography more systematically into the analysis of social and political processes including social movements and mobilization. In the year 2003, the international journal of Mobilization published a special issue aiming to celebrate the potential synergy between geography, sociology

and political science in the study of contentious politics and social movements. Important names in social movement research including Charles Tilly were among the contributors, who agreed on the necessity of linking contentious politics to space and place.

I think that a geography perspective would clarify some of my discussion in this dissertation. For this study, I preferred to focus on southeastern city centers in Turkey rather than western city centers that have received equally substantial amount of (if not more) displaced Kurdish population. This was because of my specific interest on the changing nature of pro-Kurdish contention in its origin. The importance of '*geography/space*' in this study unfolds at two different levels: at the first level, there is 'Southeastern Turkey' which refers to a particular region characterized by the "Eastern/Kurdish Question", armed conflict, political violence and economic underdevelopment. This has repercussions in terms of how this geography is perceived at the international level (a geography that is contentious in terms of the Turkish state's sovereign control over it, therefore from the perspective of the international community, political intervention might be justified).

At the second level, there is an '*urban topography*' where the majority of the displaced Kurds has ended up, and became 'political' and also 'radical.' Aside from technical definitions, 'urban' refers to the political space offering physical visibility, networks and communication as well as political opportunities to mobilize. In this vein, 'urban' is distinguished from geographically distant, politically isolated and

undeveloped ‘rural’ where grassroots mobilization has been until recently limited to guerilla warfare. I am particularly interested in understanding the role of geography in recent pro-Kurdish mobilization in southeastern Turkey; not only the direct grassroots mobilization around the PKK, but rather the processes of politicization and mobilization that many conflict-affected Kurdish migrants have been involved in southeastern city centers following their experiences with displacement and political violence; therefore predicaments as well as opportunities available in a particular locality to make voices heard in a way that make resonance at policy level.

Borrowing the notion of ‘disciplining space’ from Kim Rygiel (1998), I construe the processes of conflict, violence and displacement as embedded in geography in such a way that the aim of the parties in struggle is to control and discipline a particular geography as well as to assert their claims to it. I think that not only the power actors such as in my case the Turkish army and the PKK guerilla units, but also actions of civilians are meaningful within geographical processes. Feldman et.al.for example make the following observation about the significance of space in understanding the local dynamics involved in the process of displacement:

> In prior thinking, connections to place and movements from it, interactions across place and complex negotiations in place, were often, although not always, assumed. This meant that the concept of place was deployed more as a descriptive than an analytic notion, and generally given only limited theoretical review. It also meant that questions associated with processes of negotiation, and with the capacities of people to make choices about displacement, have often been left unexplored. (Feldman, Geisler and Silberling 2003:7)

Adding to Feldman et.al's observation, I think that displacement is a process that does not end at the moment that people are settled in a new locality. Rather, processes of physical displacement are incorporated into politics and economics of people's experiences in destination (i.e. gradually politicized city centers in my case). My aim in this respect is to explore whether and under what circumstances—in Miller's (2004: 223) words-- 'social movements give voice to people and causes outside the established power structures and through ongoing discussion, education, and mobilization, create the conditions and pressures necessary for broader debate and action within the official institutions of democracy'. Indeed, the particular geography that I am looking at- Southeastern Turkey- is peculiar in a sense that there is substantial state oppression in the region in political, social, economic and cultural terms together with a political immunity discursively granted by the European Union's leverage in Turkish domestic arena through the imposition of democratization reforms and zero-tolerance to human rights violations policies. Recent political immunity enjoyed in this region is conducive to demand-making and 'making the voices heard'.

The southeastern urban space with its capacities-- including their ethnically homogenous character as opposed to western city centers with ethnic fragmentation open to ethnic tension -- is important for the Kurdish politicization to express and make itself visible. Pre-dominantly Kurdish urban space harbors forced migrant peasant communities that previously provided the means, logistic support and human

resources for guerilla activities in distant mountainous areas. Those Kurdish migrants carried into the politicized, impoverished urban settings by the waves of internal displacement are also now closer to the attention of the state elements, civil society and international community. Southeastern city centers that were relatively "neutral"[16] at the beginning of the armed conflict have in a sense lost their neutrality as conflict (in terms of increasing and intense appearance of armed vehicles and security personal as well as increasing number of hit and run attacks to the security points by the insurgents) and already "politicized" groups of displaced moved into urban areas from the rural periphery. Migrant communities have in the meantime developed close membership affiliations with the pro-Kurdish political party and civil society that made them familiar with new languages like 'democracy' and 'human rights' as I discuss in chapters 4,5 and 6.

However, geography/space presents 'constraints' as well as 'opportunities' for organization and claim-making (Tilly 2000). Miller (2004) eloquently explains the importance of a social movement's ability to communicate a particular collective identity across various scales building local, national and transnational alliances. In a parallel vein, Tilly (2003: 222) sees collective identity as a continuum with embedded

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[16] Here again, I am using the word "neutral" in a sense that urban centers were relatively immune to the conflict at the beginning of the armed conflict when the guerilla activities were concentrated in the mountainous and rural areas and displaced have flowed into the provincial centers to find shelter in those relatively "neutral" spaces. Furthermore, rather than considering the civilian people becoming affiliated with one or the other side of the armed conflict, it seems theoretically and methodologically more accurate to conceptualize them as social agents adopting strategies of accommodation to certain conditions of the armed conflict by trying to maneuver within the balance of power structures (see for example, Escobar, 2000).

and detached identities representing the polar ends. While, embedded identities refer to a wide range of social interactions necessary to claim-making, they are meaningful in small-scale spatial interaction and difficult to mobilize beyond that scale. Detached identities on the other hand are more all-encompassing and easier to mobilize across scales. In this respect according to Tilly (2003: 224), a collective action is successful when it manages to take locally embedded identities and 'makes the basis for new larger scale, detached identities'. Miller (2004: 224) further agues, '[t]raditional geographies of mobilization, rooted in localized places and the nation-state, appear to be in relative decline' and '… oppositional groups have failed to transcend these confines of 'militant particularism' or 'particular localism' (also see Swyngedouw 1997).

In this respect, I explain in this dissertation that pro-Kurdish mobilization at the elite level as well as at the level of grassroots before and during the pervasive violence against the civilians has failed to establish strategic allegiances with different social, economic, political and intellectual groups in Turkish society through operationalizing the notion of justice and/or social, economic and political rights that would have appeal to social groups across ethnic identities. Grassroots mobilization remained subservient to the organized elite pro-Kurdish organizing. Articulation of pro-Kurdish demands has been rather contained within a notion of 'victimization' of a people. Displacement of the Kurdish communities during the armed conflict years together with the other forms of human rights violations have received international

attention to the extent that the Kurds are portrayed as 'victims' of human rights violations rather than as a collectivity able to organize and mobilize a legitimate cause. In this regard, transnational rights discourses have been in fact counterproductive for the interests of the pro-Kurdish mobilization in the long run by confusing the demands of the movement as well as depoliticizing those demands by reducing them to the (individual) human rights.

Pro-Kurdish mobilization has further been unable to maintain the sympathy of their European allies in the Diaspora due to the radicalization and criminalization of the PKK in European countries and the declining tolerance in European states and politics towards violent illegal organizations (Eccarius-Kelly 2000, 2002, Lyon and Ucarer, 2001). Despite the geographic advantage, Kurdish Diaspora politics has been trapped into a kind of 'militant particularism'.[17] Pro-Kurdish demands have been unable to legitimize their cause in domestic domain and/or internationalize the local experiences with oppression at a same articulation level as for example groups like

[17] The limited support that Kurdish Diaspora has received from Europe is an issue that requires further research. As I mention later on in this dissertation, EU has used the Kurdish card against Turkey during the 1990s in order to postpone the membership negotiations with Turkey. So, human rights violations in southeastern Turkey and socio-economic disparities between eastern and western Turkey have always been in the EU progress reports on Turkey and on the diplomatic table. However, it is open to question and necessitates further research to assess to what extent EU engagement with the Kurdish question was a product of the autonomous pro-Kurdish movement and commitment and to what extent civil and political pro-Kurdish mobilization has been effective in influencing the EU agenda in a substantive way. Considering that the post-1980 Kurdish mobilization by civil and political actors has been led by the PKK and this organization is considered as a terrorist organization by EU, the US and many other countries around the world, it is quite problematic to argue that the pro-Kurdish mobilization in Turkey and by Turkish Kurds in Diaspora has a 'legitimate' stance in the eyes of the international community.

Zapatistas who formed transnational alliances with a spectrum of civil society ranging from human rights groups to leftist organizations (see for example the discussion on Zapatistas in Harvey 2000).

METHOGOLOGICAL APPROACH

In order to understand the social and political processes of the armed conflict, I used a multiple-level research design. I was particularly interested in the changing nature of articulation between the contentious actors including the displaced Kurds, the elements of the Turkish state and the pro-Kurdish organized actors. My principal method was semi-structured, open-ended interviews, the majority of them conducted with the displaced Kurdish communities in Diyarbakir city center. Diyarbakir is the major provincial center in southeastern Turkey and the center of pro-Kurdish politics in Turkey. For reliability and validity purposes, a lesser number of interviews were also conducted in the provincial center of a second major southeastern city, Van with a different social, economic and political composition- for the findings in the second place to be juxtaposed against the findings derived from the interviews conducted in Diyarbakir.

Van is different from Diyarbakir in such that in addition to the strength of the pro-Kurdish politics (DEHAP/DTP-Democratic People's Party/Democratic Society Party) and organizing in the province there is also considerable power of the pro-Islamist political party (AKP-Justice and Development Party) competing with the pro-Kurdish politics effectively; as evinced in the last general and local government

elections with the victory of the pro-Islamists against the pro-Kurdish political party. In Diyarbakir, in that respect, pro-Kurdish organization is much stronger and effective in reaching and mobilizing the grassroots in comparison to the other predominantly Kurdish provinces including Van. Van is also socio-economically more isolated and culturally traditional and closed in comparison to Diyarbakir that is the center of pro-Kurdish civil society and politics in Turkey with a relatively more complicated urban culture and socio-economic structure. More detailed information on sample and methodology can be found in the Appendix.

Interviews were conducted in the major migrant receiving neighborhoods in all local districts under the jurisdiction of the Diyarbakir metropolitan center. Interviewees were identified via my personal networks with the local NGOs, the local municipalities and the informal neighborhood commissions as well as through my personal efforts to reach out to the displaced Kurds who were basically out of reach of the organized groups. These interviews may or may not represent the views of the entire displaced population. However, certain patterns presented in the data are enough to draw conclusions with regard to the trajectories of radical politicization, increasing marginalization and social exclusion experienced by the urban poor and the past and the present root causes of the declining legitimacy of the state in the eye of local Kurds.

I chose in-depth interviews as my principal method because I was interested in how conflict-affected Kurds perceive and articulate their own experiences with

political violence, their encounters with the state agencies and interactions with the organized Kurdish groups. I was interested in how these people perceive their own ability (and/or agency) to make changes, to engage with the local and national power holders to initiate change as well as their judgments about the limits of their agency. More importantly, I was interested in how these people interpret their needs, concerns, expectations, demands and rights, and how they imagine their future 'life projects' to secure material well-being, peace and political safety. More than half of the migrant interviews were conducted in Kurdish (in Kurmaji or Zazaic dialect) with the help of an interpreter. The rest were conducted in Kurdish and Turkish or only in Turkish. All migrant names have been changed in the dissertation for privacy purposes.

I also conducted in-depth interviews with a group of local and national key informants to investigate relations and channels of communication between the organizations with which the informants were associated and the state and the civil society on the one hand and the displaced groups of people on the ground on the other. My key informant interviews include the mayors of local municipalities (Diyarbakir and Van), representatives of NGOs (Diyarbakir, Van, Ankara and Istanbul), 'Socio-economic Development Program' officers in the GAP administration (Southeastern Development Project) (Diyarbakir, Urfa), one representative from Diyarbakir Chamber of Commerce, representatives from the state' s "Social Services Provincial Administration"-Sosyal Hizmetler il Mudurlugu

(Diyarbakir), UNDP and UNHCR representatives (Ankara), one Kurdish MP (member of Parliament) from Diyarbakir (Ankara) and lawyers (Diyarbakir, Istanbul) to assess the social, political, economic and legal consequences and implications of violence and the conflict related population displacement. The key informant interviews were conducted in Turkish. Names of the key informants and their affiliation can be found in the Appendix. Some of the key informant names are omitted and the names of their organizational affiliations have been replaced with pseudonyms upon informants' request or based on my discretion for privacy and security purposes.

In Diyarbakir and Van, I also had a chance to meet and have informal talks with many people from various backgrounds including local, national and foreign journalists, people working for pro-Kurdish local news media, engineers and architects working in state agricultural development projects as well as in municipality projects, local and foreign social workers, village teachers, Kurdish writers and activists including a group of foreigners from Syria and Iraq. I also had meetings with several former PKK members who were at the time of the encounters officially or unofficially affiliated either with pro-Kurdish political party (DEHAP) or pro-Kurdish NGOs.

I also conducted participant observations in Diyarbakir and Van. This entailed attending NGO meetings, activities and seminars, attending weekly municipality neighborhood conventions, participating in cultural events and traveling with the key

informants to learn about their activities and engagements with their local target groups. These observations were an integral part of this project because they enabled me to learn more about the internal dynamics in the NGOs that I interviewed and also the local dynamics between the organized pro-Kurdish groups and their constituency. Participant observation also allowed me to diversify my networks and to reach out to migrant communities with different characteristics.

Finally, I also collected documents from the Turkish parliament, NGOS and political organizations and the local municipalities, as well as relevant issues of national newspapers (including the pro-Kurdish ones) between the years 2004 and 2006.

In the coming chapters I first describe the political context in Turkey for the changing nature of Kurdish mobilization in Turkey. I focus on the local context of southeastern Turkey and explicate how local socio-economic conditions, politics and relations have been shaped under the influence of global, international and national structures and forces; and experienced by local people as processes. It is the very local context in which various forms of pro-Kurdish ethno-nationalist and ethno-political sentiments emerge, interplay with the national, regional and transnational dynamics and are transformed into expectations, demands as well as contention between the local and the central state. This very local context is embedded into broader structures, but entertains its very specific meanings, relations and power dynamics.

CHAPTER-2

CHANGING FACE OF THE KURDISH QUESTION IN TURKEY IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

This chapter sketches the three general domestic trajectories that developed after 1980s in Turkey, which the rest of this dissertation analyzes in relation to the impact of the ethnic*ized* political violence on the displaced civilian Kurdish population in southeastern Turkey. First is the declining state legitimacy in the public domain following the infamous 1980 military coup. Second is the rise of identity politics and pro-Kurdish politics as an ethno-political claim. The third one is associated with socio-economic restructuring, increasing poverty and declining limits of social welfare in Turkey. I therefore point out in this chapter that the new faces of the *Kurdish Question* in Turkey have in fact been defined under the forces of the domestic transformations in Turkey's social, economic and political domain that are associated with the changing global conjecture after the end of the Cold War.

The contemporary face of the Kurdish issue in Turkey is rooted in the systemic problems of Turkish politics and the economic restructuring since the late 1980s. Kurdish ethno-political identity was reconstituted and mobilized during 1990s as mass scale population displacement intensified, spreading ethnic-based politicization and mobilization. The new era in the Kurdish resistance coincided with and subtly instigated by the neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey.

1980 MILITARY COUP AND THE STATE LEGITIMACY

Although, state violence and violent Kurdish resistance have their roots in Turkish history, the late 1980s marked a new turning point in Turkey's *Kurdish Question.*The pro-Kurdish mobilization started by the PKK has been analytically different than the earlier forms of pro-Kurdish riots and uprisings organized around tribal and religious establishments targeting the Turkish state, not because it was 'Turkish' but because it was a 'state', a modern, centralized, secular one (Bozarslan 2000, also Yeğen 1999). In 1990s, Turkey's ever-changing Kurdish Question started to be ethnicized and Kurdish identity to be politicized. As also noted by Icduygu et.al (1999:993), "the solidification and propagation of Kurdish ethnicity were largely products of recent years". The point here is such that it is not the ethnic characteristic of southeastern Turkey that make it a peculiar geography, but (rather) recent-mainly last two decade- politicization of the region through a web of socio-economic and political trajectories that have been imposed upon it. The 1980 military coup violently repressed the societal contention and democratic civil society in Turkey, instead of helping to reconcile the political bifurcation and radicalization in society. Repressive political engineering undertaken by the military facilitated the starting of the large-scale political violence in southeastern Turkey, as well as its turning into an ethno-political question for Turkey to resolve.

Foundations of social and political polarization that led to the 1980 military coup were prepared during 1960s and 1970s. Turkey's economic integration with

Europe had already started in 1960s with initiation of tariff reductions that debilitated the small and medium sized businesses throughout time (Taspinar 2005). A gradual transition from the ISI to market economy selectively favoring the big business class was already underway starting from 1970s, which economically marginalized social classes such as workers, small capital owners and peasants across Turkey. Pro-market policies had particularly hit hard the poor peasant communities as the lifting of import tariffs on agricultural products together with ongoing mechanization left millions of unemployed peasants barely surviving in rural areas and/or rushing in urban centers to look for jobs in 1970s (Cam 2005). Therefore, market economy was gradually and unevenly infiltrating into an economic system characterized by the import substitution (ISI) policies including import restrictions and manipulation of the exchange rate.

As mainstream political parties started to lose their image and legitimacy in face of the growing socio-economic distress in the country, pro-Islamist party politics gained grounds during 1960s and 1970s as their ideological emphasis on development and industrialization without compromising ideals of solidarity, community and religious brotherhood seemed to cure the economic stagnation and deterioration in the country as well as marginalization that the Anatolian masses had found themselves in. On the one hand, class politics of left wing-right wing camps turned into violent battles and ubiquitous social tension; whilst, as Taspinar (2003) argues identity-based groups had already started to surface within the left and right wing camps of 1970s. "While Sunni-conservatism and Turkish nationalism found their place within

rightwing political parties…..the majority of Alevi [a non-Sunni Muslim category crosscutting ethnic groups[18]] and urbanized Kurdish communities supported leftist political movements." (Taspinar 2003:137) Therefore, identity-based politicization surfaced, but to a large extent encapsulated within the class-based politicization during the 1970s.

By the year 1980, political violence waged by the right-wing and left-wing activists especially in urban centers reached unprecedented levels. The atmosphere of anarchy was prevailing in Turkish society. The political system was unable to tackle the social tension and ideological polarization, as the existing political parties actually contributed to the socio-political chaos with their disorientation (Taspinar 2003). The national economic indicators were rapidly deteriorating in face of economic stagnation. In September 1980, the Turkish army intervened in civilian politics for the third time in Turkish history and remained in power for three years before it handed power to the civilian authorities in 1983. During the three years of military rule, urban violence was suppressed, right wing-left wing extremist groups were crushed and favorable conditions for the upcoming neo-liberal restructuring were prepared. Trade Unions and the bargaining power of labor were strictly restricted in order to prevent any public resistance towards the liberal economic structural adjustment programs

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[18] There are Turkish Alevis as well as Kurdish and Arab Alevi citizens in Turkey. As representing an ethno-religious group marginalized by the Sunni tendencies of the state practices, Alevi identity politics has also gained momentum starting from 1970s.

(see for example Demir, 2005, also see Cizre-Sakallıoğlu and Yeldan 2000). The army in fact intervened to ensure that already started pro-market transformation would continue at a faster pace without any resistance from society.

The Turkish army with the 1980 military coup while preparing the socio-political ground auspicious for the implementation of the neo-liberal restructuring gave a fatal blow to Turkish democracy by repressing resistant progressive civil society; and in turn, contributed to the crystallization of identity-based cleavages (religious and ethnic identities)[19]. During the repressive military junta rule, not only the extremist leftist and rightist groups, but also progressive social groups such as writers, academicians, journalists and organized student and labor groups were violently suppressed. Hundreds of intellectuals, journalists and politicians were held responsible for inciting and inflicting socialist ideas, and arrested or deported. The military regime also undertook the task of writing a new constitution. The 1982 constitution written under the close military surveillance destroyed the promisingly

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[19] There is an increasing tendency among the scholars of Turkey to associate the authoritarian nature of the Turkish military and the central bureaucracy with the original Kemalist founding premises of the Turkish Republic. On the one hand, I think that the highly centralized and secular nature of the founding premises of the Republic was meant to protect the country against Islamist fundamentalism and ethnic-nationalist (Turkish as well as Kurdish and/or any other ethnicity residing in the Turkish territory for that matter) radicalization (for a parallel reading, see for example Ercan-Argun 1999). On the other hand, I am also convinced that the path followed by the Turkish military especially starting with the 1980 military coup has diverged from the original Kemalist ideals of economic and political sovereignty further and further (for an analytical work done on the political economy of the Turkish military see for example Demir 2005, Öniş 2000, 2003, Cizre-Sakallioglu and Yeldan 2000). I think that an analytical examination of the current position of the Turkish army in Turkish politics and/or in relation to Turkish politics should be done within the changing domestic, regional and international political economic context that the Turkish army has evolved into without holding the Kemalist revolution (which has never been successfully completed anyway) responsible for each and every wrongdoing of the contemporary Turkish military establishment and the central bureaucracy.

democratic spirit of the 1961 constitution, which was also a military product following the first military coup of the Turkish Republic in 1960. Turkish democracy experienced a rapid deterioration with the ban placed upon the freedoms of thought and association as trade unions and labor organizations were abolished and universities were put under strict state control in order to fight the 'communist threat'.

Kurdish activist groups were among the many segments of the politicized groups that the military regime pushed out of the realm of the politics and suppressed. Indeed, the discontent among the Kurdish activists had already started in the 1970s since those groups were gradually frustrated with the failing of the class politics and alienated from their Turkish socialist and communist counterparts who were reluctant to introduce ethnic elements into the spirit of their socialist revolution (Taspinar 2005). Considering the increasing visibility of the Kurdish groups in 1970s, the military coup took repressive measures including a ban on the Kurdish language[20] (that was lifted in 1991[21]). In the year 1983, the formation of ethnic parties was prohibited by new legal amendments. And it is ironic that the first pro-Kurdish political parties started to organize in 1990s not earlier (a point that is reminded by Yeğen 2006). It was in this domestic environment that Kurdish ethno-political

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[20] It is interesting and noteworthy that an official ban on Kurdish language was placed in 1980s (not earlier times) as a reaction towards the politicization of the Kurdish identity which was a new development in the making.

[21] The ban on Kurdish speech and publications was lifted in 1991 during the army-sponsored government of Turgut Özal who claimed to be half Kurdish. The ban on education and broadcasting in Kurdish were also annulled with constitutional amendments in 2002 (Özbudun and Yazici 2004).

organizing around the PKK went underground and resorted to violence starting right after the military coup (Bozarslan, 2000).

The military regime transferred political power to the civilian authorities by 1984. Through repressing class-based politics together with the newly organizing pro-Kurdish groups and embracing Islamist politics as a bulwark against the communist threat, the Turkish army aimed to depoliticize Turkish society. The repercussions of these military-sponsored political engineering led to an upsurge and radicalization in ethnic and religious terms in 1990s within the new era of neo-liberalism that is ironically seen as a phase of 'democratic opening' in Turkey by the circles supporting a liberal economy. Dissemination of identity-based politics (ethnic as well as religious) was indeed prompted by the hands of the Turkish army that in the subsequent years would be riddled with struggles against the upsurge of Kurdish nationalism and Islamist fundamentalism as well (for a rough account on the role of the Turkish army in nationalist and fundamentalist upsurge, see for example Cam 2005).

Dissemination of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist sentiments among the grassroots and mass-scale grassroots mobilization in southeastern Turkey did not happen until 1990s. In the same vein, pro-Islamist party politics gained momentum only in 1990s after a decade of socio-political experience with drastic neo-liberal restructuring measures and IMF that led to political corruption and favoritism, further economic insecurity particularly among the growing number of urban masses,

increasing socio-economic inequalities and poverty in Turkey. Indeed, both mass ethnic radicalism and fundamentalist Islamist upsurge occurred in 1990s as the utmost manifestation of the declining legitimacy of the mainstream politics as a social, political and economic guarantor in the eye of the Turkish as well as Kurdish masses[22].

Local Discontent turning into Political Violence

Southeastern Turkey has been subject to unprecedented levels of intra-regional and interregional inequalities since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. Throughout time, social equity within the region as well as between the region and the rest of country has deteriorated due to uneven modernization and economic development, and the recent armed conflict (M.E. Bozarslan 1966[2002], Özer 1998 and also see Avcioğlu 1969). Original socio-economic projections of the Kemalist revolution in the form of land reform to set the foundations for distributive justice and rural education projects (Village Institutions/Köy Enstitüleri)-- parallel to political secularization process at the state level--to initiate social and civic empowerment on

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[22] These developments should be examined as domestic and regional repercussions of the contemporary nature of globalization, the upsurge in ethnic and Islamist violence in the world after the end of the Cold War. Violent face of ethnic radicalism in the form of the PKK insurgency as well as Islamist fundamentalist violence perpetuated both in the form of organized acts of groups such as Hezbullah and also sporadic acts of individuals affiliated with the fundamentalist organizing including the massacre of 37 secular Turkish intellectuals in an Anatolian city in 1993 by a group of radical Turkish Islamists all emerged as parallel forms of the regional and local repercussions of the post Cold War globalization and neo-liberal restructuring. A straightforward relationship between the upsurge in Islamist fundamentalist violence after the Cold War and the US international interests and proxy wars during the Cold War is eloquently pointed out by scholars like Mamdani (see for example Mamdani 2006). It is also noteworthy to mention that a *de facto* Kurdish state in Northern Iraq was established with the intervention of the US following the Gulf crisis in early 1990s within the political vacuum left

the ground could never been realized[23]. Historically, the region has been dominated by the tribal chiefs having majority of the land resources distributed among each other. The land reform undertaken by the state in 1930s aiming to redistribute large land properties among landless peasants could not be implemented in southeastern Turkey due to the state's reluctance to antagonize powerful Kurdish tribal chiefs. After the transition to a multiparty regime in 1940s, under political party competition and patronage relations, it has even become more difficult to implement a land reform in southeastern Turkey which has been a major hindrance for overcoming poverty, achieving even economic development in the region and ensuring intra-regional redistributive justice (M.E. Bozarslan 1966[2002], Cin 1987).

Land distribution has remained quite the same until present time (see for example, Baris NPT:2006). As McDowall (1997: 243) notes, today "…8 percent of farming families own over 50 percent of the land, while 80 percent of farming families are evenly balanced between those holding up to 5 hectares and those who own no land at all." The contradiction is that while breaking down the traditional socio-economic structures based on feudal and/or tribal relations in certain parts of the southeastern region (population displacement was a means to facilitate this

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in international relations right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which directly stimulated the ethno-nationalist cause of an ethnic broker like the PKK.

[23] For a discussion on the political economy of the rural southeastern Turkey, see for example Avcioğlu 1969 and Karaömerlioğlu 2000. Although I do not have space to go into details regarding the problematic of democracy, I would like to note that together with democratization and later on economic liberalization in Turkey, it has been much more difficult to achieve land redistribution in southeastern Turkey.

political aim throughout Turkish history), the state has also deliberately maintained the traditional forms of social structure in other parts of the region by co-opting the state-friendly tribal units and religious establishments within the populist party politics.

Already existing systems of exploitative power dynamics based on socio-economic relations embedded in tribal/feudal system-concentration of land, economic opportunities and political power in the hands of a small group of tribal chiefs were redefined by the central Turkish state marginalizing the peasant communities that have been socio-economically dependent on the very same system.[24] Coupled with the uneven penetration of the capitalist economy in the region after 1950s, socio-economic development trajectories worked for further marginalization and impoverishment of the peasant communities. Local communities were left in political vacuum as well as in further social and economic vulnerabilities that emerged out of

[24] However, the Turkish state's consolidation process was neither limited to the Kurds nor did it merely target the Kurdish populated areas of the new Republic of Turkey. Even though the underpinnings of the Kurdish nationalist thesis are hard to dispute, these arguments contain plenty of generalizations and use very broad strokes to paint a picture where primordially defined Kurdish people have always been fighting a static and monolithic Turkish Republic. Rather than seeing such policies of the new republic as acts of aggression and invasion directed only at the Kurds, we should remember that in those years the new Turkish state tried to remake not only the Kurds but everybody who remained within the borders of the new country to found a centralized secular nation-state. The general nature of the Kemalist nation-state building as well as the state violence used to centralize, modernize and secularize is not something unique to the Kemalist revolution (see for example Tilly 1985, 1994).

the rapidly changing structural forces in the southeast that failed to offer economic and political integrative measures for those distant, marginalized Kurdish peasants.[25]

Immediate recruitment for the PKK came from these poor peasant communities. Especially poorly educated youngsters with no social and economic future prospects, education and/or employment opportunities were willing to join the organization in search of better social status. These young people had also already been highly radicalized during the class-based bifurcated domestic political environment of the 1960s and 1970s so that violence was not difficult for them to embrace (Bozarslan, 2004). Martial law in southeastern Turkey continued to be implemented even after the withdrawal of the Turkish army from civilian politics in 1984. In 1986, the majority of the southeastern provinces were officially put under a state of emergency (OHAL) for about a decade until it was gradually lifted between 1999 and 2002. Though Kurdish insurgency in Turkey has not been limited to the PKK, the emergence of this Marxist-Leninist separatist organization has opened a new phase in Turkey's '*Kurdish Question*' with its leadership organized by university dropouts and mass support coming from the landless/poor peasant communities. Although the PKK was already active during the late 1970s, it started

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[25] As opposed to arguments casting the Kemalist Revolution and Kemalist state-building policies as the root causes of the emergence of the PKK in the southeast; I believe and argue that the pro-Kurdish mobilization under the ethnicized PKK ideology was a product of the *failings* of the implementation of the Kemalist premises of secularism, pluralism, distributive justice and egalitarianism based on civic virtues rather than ethnic divisions. I think that ethnic conflict in the region emerged not due to the Kemalist policies; but rather due to the fact that they have never been successfully implemented in social, economic and political arena. A parallel reading of the Kurdish Question was eloquently done by Betigul Ercan-Argun (1999) with a focus on the Kemalist ideals of universal citizenship rights.

the guerilla war against the elements of the Turkish state and the Kurdish collaborators in the first half of 1980s.

Starting from the early 1980s, southeastern Turkey was caught in between the PKK violence, state violence, extralegal practices of the emergency rule, and the massive forced migrations of Turkish Kurds in and across the region. Together with the geographical dissemination and the rising intensity of the armed conflict in 1990s, the state presence in southeastern Turkey took a more and more militarized nature. The Turkish army started to militarize state-friendly Kurdish communities under the system of 'village guards[26]' (Köy Koruculuğu) in 1985 by providing them with arms and keeping them in the conflict zones to fight the PKK. The primary goal of the army was to restore central state control in the region as well as to exterminate the centrifugal forces that could jeopardize national unity (see for example Chaliand 1992, Kirisci and Winrow 1997, Barkey and Fuller 1998, McDowall 2004 for a general historical background). While the insurgents' violence targeted the state

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[26] According to a 2006 source, there are currently more than 70,000 Kurds working for the Turkish state as 'village guards' in their original rural places of residence. This number evinces that together with their family members, there are hundreds of thousands of Kurds in the southeast organized around gun-power. Village guards are given armed power and paid salaries by the Turkish state to protect their own villages, collaborate with the state and the Turkish security forces, and prevent PKK abuses and terror in the region. It is also noteworthy that village guards have become a serious problem when they started to abuse their armed power against their own villagers and neighboring villages and force the local people to leave their homes in order to expropriate the land and property left behind. Therefore the village guards themselves have become a cause of displacement in many Southeast villages. The interviews during the field research show that more than half of the interviewers give the village guard system as either the cause of their displacement or the obstacle preventing them from returning back home. There are also a few Arab villages armed through the village guard system. Though the exact number of the Turkish citizens with Arabic origin is not known due to lack of systematic information on ethnic origin, Arabs constitute a small minority among Kurds in Southeastern Turkey. (see for example, TESEV report 2006)

supporters, such as Turkish civil servants and the state-friendly Kurdish communities as well as infrastructure and public investment sites; state violence turned against the armed guerilla and also the civilians allegedly providing logistic support for the illegal organization. Plantations and forests were also burned down by the Turkish army in order to better control and monitor the conflict topography.

Peasant communities hesitant to side with the Turkish security forces under the Kurdish paramilitary system (village guards) were considered by the Turkish army actual or potential dissidents ready to join the PKK or support the separatist organization logistically. Further the PKK launched attacks against the 'enemy' (the Turkish state) and the 'betrayers' (state friendly Kurdish communities). Polarization among the rural communities as pro-PKK vs. pro-state has introduced new enmities into already fragmented and hostile relations among the rural Kurds. These enmities between the PKK and state-friendly Kurdish communities and between the PKK and the fundamentalist Kurdish Hezbullah[27] which would enter the scene of violence in 1990s displaced thousands of people during 1990s. Displacement in a peculiar way turned into a means for the sides of the armed conflict to see "who is with us" and

[27] Hezbullah is an outlawed radical Kurdish Islamist organization founded in Diyarbakır in late 1970s, engaged in violent activities against the elements of the Turkish state as well as the PKK members and sympathizers throughout the Southeastern Turkey. It recruited members from the local Kurdish communities. Turkey's Hezbullah is unrelated to the Lebanese Hezbullah although they have some common ideological basis (see for example Jon Gorvett, 2000, Hikmet Cicek, 2000, Taha Akyol, 2000 and Emin Demirel 2001).

"who is not" as well as differentiates the geography in terms of who controls which part of the topography.

A considerably larger amount of civilian Kurds were displaced during the operations of the Turkish security forces aimed at depopulating the conflict zones in order to cut the human and logistic support that the PKK was extracting from peasant communities. According to a recent state-sponsored study on village evacuations, during the course of the armed conflict from 1986 to 1995 between 950.000 and 1.200.000 people were driven out of their places of residents due to 'security reasons' (TGYONA, 2006). Villages, but also towns such as Lice- the original physical base of the PKK within the provincial borders of Diyarbakir and the provincial center of Şirnak were completely or partially evacuated during 1990s (TBMM-Parliamentary Report, 1998). Displacement particularly targeted two groups of Kurds that are not necessarily mutually exclusive; PKK supporters and sympathizers, and the Kurdish communities that were not willing to fight on the side of the Turkish security forces. Both groups 'failed' in the eyes of the state to show/prove their 'loyalty' as 'legitimate' citizens.

Population displacement, either by the hand of the Turkish army or due to other conflict-related causes, was strategically important for the Turkish security forces to disconnect the PKK guerilla from the local communities with the hope that the displaced Kurds would mingle with urban populations and assimilate (Then Vice President Turgut Özal -of a half Kurdish family from the eastern province of Malatya,

most ironically- even made similar comments about his conviction that it would be much easier to 'assimilate' the local Kurdish communities into the broader Turkish society if they were settled in western urban centers,(Cemal 2003)). However, in most cases, not only PKK propaganda, but also state violence targeting 'suspicious' civilians, contributed to the increasing popularity of the illegal organization among displaced Kurds including those who were not even initially sympathetic with the organization (Ergil 1995). Through political migrations, frustration and political anxiety among the local people have been carried to new places including the western and southern Turkish provinces as well as the Diaspora in Europe.[28]

Between 1992 and 1995, political violence in the southeast reached unprecedented levels. The PKK established almost *de facto* control in towns like Lice of Diyarbakir and provincial centers of Hakkari and Sirnak. It is not surprising that Lice district center and Sirnak city center were evacuated by the Turkish security forces between 1992 and 1995 in addition to thousands of villages and hamlets in the region. The Turkish security forces also extended their operations across the Iraqi border deploying armed forces in northern Iraq and chasing the PKK guerillas across the border (Romano 2006 and Taspinar 2005). The civilian politicians watched the

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[28] Dogu Ergil's (1995) survey study on displaced Kurds in major provincial centers in Turkey, although criticized a lot due to the reliability and validity problems involved in the survey methodology, provides valuable insights about the prevalence of anti-state sentiments among Kurdish forced migrants in comparison to Kurdish economic migrants also see Van Bruinessen 1998 and Eccarius-Kelly 2000 for general discussion on conflict-produced Kurdish Diaspora in Europe and rising power of the PKK organizing across Europe during 1990s

violence with their hands tied, mostly unwilling to intervene in the military actions or unable to do so. According to a 1998 parliamentary report, village evacuations were admitted as incompatible with the principles of the rule of law; but indeed military actions could easily be justified under the legal jurisdiction of the emergency rule regime granting colossal authority to the regional governor of OHAL (emergency situation) and the elements of the army. The Human Rights Minister of the government in power in 1994, Azimet Köylüoğlu- who himself was a Kurd from the province of Tunceli in the southeast, stated that the village and hamlet destructions were nothing but 'state terrorism' calling attention to the fact that about two million people had been displaced in southeastern Turkey between 1984 and 1994 (Parliamentary Report 1998).

Interestingly enough, conflict-induced displacement of Turkish Kurds including village evacuations did not get publicized enough by the Turkish media in 1990s. While the Turkish society watched the Iraqi Kurds rushing towards the Turkish border in two different occasions in 1988 and early 1990s[29], mass village

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[29] About 100,000 Iraqi Kurds rushed to the Turkish-Iraqi border in search of refuge during the 1988 refugee crises that erupted after Saddam Hussein's attack on the Kurdish town of Halabja (see for example Romano 198-204). While the entire world media turned their attention to the situation involving the death of about 5,000 Iraqi Kurds and thousands of other desperate civilians on the border waiting for the Turkish authorities to open the border, the event became one of the first alarms for the Turkish public and politicians who started to conceive Turkey's own Kurdish issue as having "a clearly articulated ethnic dimension" (see for example, Taspinar 2005:102). The second event was the even bigger refugee crisis following Saddam Hussein's government's attacks in Northern Iraq to suppress the Kurdish uprising after the 1990-1991 Gulf War. This time about two million Kurds accumulated on the Turkish-Iraqi and Iranian-Iraqi border seeking to enter Iran and Turkey. In Turkey, Turkish soldiers with guard dogs stopped the unwelcome masses. Iran was much more welcoming towards the Kurdish refugees and opened its border to about 1.5 million Iraqi Kurds. Quite

evacuations in southeastern Turkey especially during the first half of 1990s remained unknown to political memories of many Turkish citizens living outside of the conflict zones. When the Kurdish communities started to be driven out of their homes in the conflict-affected areas across eastern and southeastern Turkey, there was no political incentive and public interest to assist these uprooted people[30].

National Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were either non-existent or unable to draw attention to the immediate needs of the conflict-driven communities. International CSOs were not allowed to access the displaced Kurds for various political and institutional limitations[31]. Aside from limited aid provided by a 1994 national "Return to Village Project" initiated during the presidency of Bülent Ecevit to encourage the return migration from urban to rural across Turkey, there was no systematic state program to help the social and economic adjustment of the displaced Kurds in their places of destination and/or to facilitate their return to their original places of residence until the year 1998. The political sensitivity associated with the issue has prevented the state taking meaningful political actions to cope with armed conflict-driven displacement of its Kurdish citizens during the armed conflict in 1990s.

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ironically, Turkey collaborated with the international community to establish a 'safe haven' for Kurds in Northern Iraq which actually secured an Autonomous Kurdish Zone for a *de facto* Kurdish state in the region (for a most recent account see for example Romano 2006).

[30] TBMM-Parliamentary Report—"constitutional rights violated during and after the village evacuations included the principle of equality before the law, the right to protect and develop one's life, the sanctity of private and family life, the sanctity of domicile, the right to property, and the principle of protection of basic rights and freedoms" (listed in Ayata and Yukseker 2005:18)

[31] See chapter 6 footnote 132 for details.

Despite reactions from members of the Turkish parliament against Turkish army operations targeting the civilian population during 1990s, the displacement issue was perceived by the Turkish army and the state actors in general as a *normal* and *necessary* part of counterinsurgency activities[32]. Apart from their inability to influence military decisions, the few politicians who brought up the issue into the Parliamentary agenda did not even gather enough support within the parliament to stop the village evacuations and to initiate a state program to meet the basic needs of the displaced population. One year after my fieldwork, in a follow-up meeting with Algan Hacaloğlu, a previous and current member of the parliament from the Republican People's Party (CHP), Hacaloğlu talked about his efforts together with a handful of Turkish and Kurdish parliamentarians during 1990s to 'warn' the Turkish

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[32] At this point, I disagree with the strand of recent research which argues that the Turkish state denied the forced migration of civilians during the course of the armed conflict (Ayata and Yukseker 2005, 2006). In fact, Turkish state reaction to the forced migration of the Kurdish civilians was not monolithic. Various actors within the state including some Parliamentarians brought the issue into attention. Prime Ministers of 1990s such as Bülent Ecevit made declarations about the issue in several occasions stating that the villages were evacuated for 'security reasons'. The general state stance towards the issue was to cast it as a security precaution. In this vein, the causes of forced village evacuations were defined within the state discourse as 'security reasons' aiming to 'protect' the civilian population from the PKK exploitation (TBMM-Parliamentary Report (1998) presents the contradictory stances of the different elements of the state towards the issue in 1990s). In addition to that it is fair to say that the central governments and the Turkish army refused to negotiate on the issue, but extended limited aid to the displaced who agreed to declare that the cause of their displacement was the 'PKK terror'. Together with the cessation of the armed conflict and the gradual lifting of the emergency rule in the region by the end of 2002, state discourse and stance towards displacement has changed. The Turkish government (which happened to be the pro-Islamist AKP) started to negotiate the displacement issue with international actors including UN and took actions for policy preparation and implementation. In 2004, the government also agreed to pay compensations for village evacuations with a new law as a response to accumulating burden of the lost cases against the displaced villagers at the ECtHR.

army generals about the "social and political costs of the Kurdish forced migrations that Turkey would by no means be able to afford in the future."[33]

In addition to the humanitarian concerns involved in the issue, politicians like Hacaloğlu were also pragmatically alarmed by some possible future socio-political ramifications of the forced migrations including an upsurge in Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms on the ground in the city centers. In retrospect, one can argue that the military rationality failed to take account of the political contention that these poor rural forced migrants would create in the near future, the extent of the social problems such as poverty and urban crime to which they would contribute and also the ability of these poor, powerless disoriented groups of people to make the Turkish state liable to pay unusual amounts of monetary compensation at the ECtHR (European Court for Human Rights) in the very near future (Yildiz 2005). It is however, difficult to imagine that the army did not see something that obvious to some parliamentarians, political analysts and journalists in those years. Rather, it is realistic to argue that the army acted in a self-defensive manner in order to defeat the separatist threat. The

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[33] Follow-up Interview with Algan Hacaloğlu, a Member of the Parliament from the Republican People's Party provided me with his insights regarding the impacts of the displacement of the Kurdish citizens on the political and social stability in Turkey and the regional economy of Southeastern Turkey. Especially since 1990s, Hacaloğlu has been the initiator of extensive policy research on Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, the 'Kurdish Question' and conflict-induced population displacements in the region. The results of those policy studies have been compiled in various reports including the 1996 "Parliamentary Report"- "Report of the Parliamentary Investigation Commission Established with the Aim of Investigating the Problems of our Citizens who Migrated due to the Eviction of Settlements in East and South-east Anatolia and to Assess the Measures that Need to be Taken" and 2000 Republican People's Party report on "Democratization- Kurdish Question- Development of the East and the Southeast". Hacaloğlu indicated during the interview that he was not an ethnic Kurd but was born in and grown up in eastern Turkey, while he always identified himself

state seemed ready to face any consequences associated with the systematic political intolerance shown to the displaced Kurds so long as national unity was protected[34]. The military consolidation in the conflict zones was achieved with colossal violence if needed. Civilian state remained subservient to the army decisions in terms of the treatment given to the civilian population that the security forces were not anymore able to distinguish from the PKK militia organized in the rural.

The intriguing question coming to the fore is why the state failed to protect and accommodate the displaced Kurds, if not during the physical displacement process, after displacement. There was indeed systematic disregard towards this population within the civilian state circles despite a group of Parliamentarians trying to bring the issue into attention as a set of citizenship and human rights violations. It would be less then well-founded to argue that these Kurdish communities were disregarded because of their ethnicity. Enormous amount of funds and resources have been allocated for the Kurds under the village guard system up until today. The state has extended enormous benefits to the large scale Kurdish land owners in the region under the jurisdiction of the ongoing rural development project of GAP (Southeastern Anatolian Project) during the course of the armed conflict. Small groups of displaced Kurds (especially former village guards who were displaced by the PKK attacks[35])

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with leftist politics, some of his previous friends have joined moderate and radical pro-Kurdish politics throughout time. Summer 2006, Ankara.

[34] Interview with Hacaloğlu 2006 Ankara

[35] Interviews with displaced Kurds, Diyarbakir and Van, Turkey

have been given housing and/or aid to return and rebuilt their rural livelihoods again some under the rural development initiations of the GAP project[36]. One straightforward proposition, I would argue, is that the armed conflict and the rising salience of Kurdish ethno-nationalist politics have introduced new dynamics between the state and the conflict-affected Kurds through which the 'deserving' citizens with Kurdish origin have been distinguished from the 'so-called' citizens. The former have continued to be welcomed by the state as long as they proved their 'loyalty' and embraced the legitimacy of the Turkish army operations in the region. The later were suppressed and excluded further in so far as they remained 'suspicious' in terms of their 'loyalty' to the Turkish state.

Considering the displaced population as less then legitimate Turkish citizens, the state had deprived the displaced Kurds from their citizenship rights as well as human rights. But the responsibility to accommodate those masses and/or compensate for their damages was avoided as the evacuation actions were projected as state actions 'to protect' citizens from the PKK terror, as consequences of legitimate state acts to fight 'terrorism'. Displaced Kurds have been left on their own after displacement too, and basic urban problems arising from massive urban in-migrations have been inadequately dealt at the municipal level.[37] This is basically how the decline in state legitimacy in southeastern Turkey started to be ingrained particularly

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[36] Interview with Mehmet Acikgöz, Director, GAP (Southeastern Anatolian Project), Social and Economic Development unit, Urfa/Turkey.

among the civilians that the state was not willing to protect if did not make them a target of the army operations.

The conflict in general and displacement experience in particular destroyed the initially neutral stance of many Kurds in the southeast leaving them disoriented if not antagonistic against the Turkish state. One implication of this process has to do with the changing nature of the political agency at the grassroots level which I discuss from the perspective of the displaced Kurds in the forthcoming chapters. Detached from and unable to return to their original places of residence (mainly geographically and politically distant and isolated rural areas), they have been ignored by the central state until very recently and settled in precarious urban neighborhoods with no adequate social services and/or infrastructure. The armed conflict lasted until 1999 costing the lives of more than 35,000 people in the region. After a short cessation between 1999 and 2004 following the ceasefire declared by the PKK, clashes between the Turkish security forces and the Kurdish insurgents restarted in June 2004.

IDENTITY POLITICS AND VIOLENCE IN TURKEY

Consolidation of the Islamist as well as pro-Kurdish identity politics happened during the 1990s. Islamist politics were subtly supported by the Turkish military as a bulwark against communism in 1980s. Despite the awakening of the Turkish military

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[37] Osman Baydemir, The Mayor of the Diyarbakir Municipal Government, Forced Migration Symposium, Bilgi University, Istanbul, June 2004

in the second half of the 1990s to the danger of the fundamentalist threat; Islamists have managed to institutionalize their agendas, pragmatically transforming their radical rhetoric and creating a dynamic Islamist identity in terms of political, economic and cultural issues. The Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) became the government in the year 2002 (and re-elected recently in July 2007), with a rhetoric that ironically drew upon the Kemalist and secular premises of the Turkish state.

The 1990s created auspicious domestic and international political opportunity structures for the Islamists to organize in politics and business, institutionalize at the public and political levels and finally take over control of the government and the Turkish parliament. Indeed, the foundations of the Turkish state have taken fatal blows to its secular basis in face of the systematic institutionalization of the Islamist agenda in the public and political arena at the central and local government levels. Interestingly enough, it is not a coincidence that the violent fundamentalist organizations of the 1990s (i.e. Turkish-Kurdish Hezbullah) are currently still organized and arguably searching for 'political channels' to express their demands and claims with 'non-violent' means (see for example Faraç 2005). This is, for the most part because of the political opportunity structure that is open to exploitation by the Islamist agendas.

Organized Kurds, on the other hand have constantly failed to come up with political agendas free of PKK influence, which could have been presented and

defended on legitimate grounds and expanded through the emerging political openings in the country pushed by the European Union. The Kurdish question in Turkey has not experienced a similar transformation as the Islamist politics that would create the flexible political vision to position itself within the Turkish political system as well as in Europe[38] (see for example Keyman, 2005, also see Kasaba, 2001). During the most violent phases of the armed conflict, pro-Kurdish political actors found political channels to get their agendas represented by party politics in Turkey. However, pro-Kurdish political parties were founded one after another by groups of politicians organically tied to the PKK ideology and cadres, and annulled one after another by the constitutional court due to their affiliation with the illegal organization.

There is an intriguing paradox in this picture in terms of the politics of 'identity politics'. Despite the fact that they and their agendas were not welcome in mainstream Turkish politics, groups of pro-Kurdish politicians established political parties and participated in national and local elections during the armed conflict years (see for example Barkey, 1998). They did not win seats in the Parliament on their own due to the 10% electoral threshold that they never managed to reach at the national level, but in certain cases, these pro-Kurdish circles negotiated with the

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[38] Here I do not mean to praise the pragmatic nature of the pro-Islamist politics. Rather, I point out the fact that two separate dissident political agendas with anti-democratic tendencies followed different paths, pro-Islamist politics (through the system, making their ways within the system gradually transforming the system), pro-Kurdish politics (staying outside of the system, challenging the system as outsiders).

mainstream political parties such as SHP (Social Democratic People's Party). They even once formed an electoral pact with the SHP that enabled them to get their representatives into Parliament in 1991. They also won municipal governments in many southeastern provinces in local elections during 1990s.

In 1991, a group of pro-Kurdish party members from the HEP (People's labor Party) entered the Turkish Parliament owing to their electoral pact with the SHP in the national elections. During the swearing-in ceremony in the Parliament, they read a text in Kurdish. Acting against the Turkish constitution by using a language other than Turkish in the Parliament, the pro-Kurdish parliamentarians were expelled from their posts and arrested. The genuine purpose of the pro-Kurdish actors who were very well aware of the consequences of their actions in Parliament, seemed to show their ability to *challenge* the premises of the Turkish constitution and the state, and their lack of willingness for the time being to politically *negotiate with* the state *within* the state. In retrospect, one can argue that during the early 1990s, pro-Kurdish political actors were less interested in becoming a part of the Turkish political system and more interested in externally targeting the very established premises of the state and Turkish citizenship with demands requiring institutional restructuring (i.e. institutionalization of the Kurdish identity). Indeed, this has become rather a political strategy followed by the organized legal as well as illegal pro-Kurdish groups until present times. Pro-Kurdish actors have systematically preferred to remain *outside* of

central Turkish politics. Their goal has been rather to *challenge* the state than to take part within it and negotiate subtly[39].

The political space that was opened to these pro-Kurdish actors to get involved, maneuver and negotiate invalidates the argument that the armed conflict was the only option available to the pro-Kurdish actors. It was indeed the reverse. The more dynamic and closer the relationship between the PKK and its extensions in party politics, the more restricted the space of opportunity was (and still is) for pro-Kurdish actors to be in legitimate politics and the lesser their chances were (and still are) to justify their cause. This actually complicates the argument by the students of political violence such as Wiovierko (1999) that conflict arises when the dissident actors cannot negotiate with the power holders. The dynamics of political violence are much more complicated since in fact negotiation between the dissident actors and the power holders are hindered when the dissidents are affiliated with violence and/or perpetrators of violence, which leaves us with a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence, at least as evinced in the Turkish case.

In the 1990s, the relationship between the pro-Kurdish non-violent politicians and the violent PKK cadres contributed to the general civil and political perception in

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[39] This argument is in line with Yeğen's (2006:40) point that pro-Kurdish politics has been 'de-nationalizing' rather than being an oppositional force within the nation-state. In the last general elections hold on July 22 2007, the pro-Kurdish political party entered the Turkish parliament with 20 MPs (Member of Parliament). The party's rhetorical emphasis on unity and Turkish and Kurdish brotherhood/sisterhood in Turkey together with their confession of the 'past mistakes' done by their predecessors seems to be ready to unfold in interesting directions in the future Turkish domestic politics.

the country that the *Kurdish Question* was indeed a security problem, a matter of 'separatist terrorism,' which in turn justified the Turkish military approach to the issue with counter-violence at least in the eye of the civil politics and general Turkish public. The Kurdish movement, including the pro-Kurdish human rights movement after 1980s, has been unable and/or unwilling to establish effective strategic alliances with social, political and intellectual factions in Turkish society. Moreover, violence has always been welcome within pro-Kurdish politics and justified on the basis of 'lack of political channels available' for pro-Kurdish actors in Turkish politics. In turn, pro-Kurdish actors in the Turkish political arena have been marginalized by the state and repressed due to their organic ties with the illegal radical circles of the PKK organizing in the Middle East and Europe.

Political Violence turning into an Ethno-nationalist Claim at the Grassroots

In the early 1990s, political violence in southeastern Turkey was on rise not only in the remote mountainous areas but also in city and town centers in close proximity to the conflict zones. The Turkish army tightened the security measures endorsed by new laws and regulations including the new Anti-Terror Law and Decree 412 that granted further powers to the Governor-General (see Taspinar 2005). The PKK was also broadening its scope of influence trying to consolidate its control over certain geographical areas and population in the southeast. In March 1992, the

traditional *Newroz* celebrations[40] turned into a bloody rampage in some southeastern cities and towns including Van, Cizre, Sirnak, Mardin (Nusaybin), Hakkari (Yüksekova). According to the state records, PKK was behind the scene as a provocateur[41]. During the events 92 civilians and PKK members were killed.[42] As retribution, in the year 1993, 33 unarmed Turkish soldiers were captured and killed by an independently acting PKK unit without authorization from the PKK leadership. These events made it obvious that the organization was getting out of the control of the Turkish security forces, but was also riddled by internal power rivalries. Various other Kurdish organizations (PDK-I in Iran and PUK and KDP in Iraq) also engaged in opposition movements in their respective states in the early 1990s. Violence in the region became chronic as the Kurdish actors 'acted as dependent components in a region-wide system of violence and were not able to master their own violence, let alone that of the states.' (Bozarslan, 2004: 41, also see Romano 2006).

In December 1991, just after the national elections, new Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel gave a public speech in Diyarbakir during which he stated that "Turkey [had] recognized the *Kurdish Reality*" (Taspinar 2005: 104). It was the first

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[40] Spring festivals to celebrate the New Year according to central Asian tradition. Newroz is celebrated widely in Turkey, particular among the Kurds.

[41] http://www.belgenet.com/dava/dava11.html (Turkish)

[42] The March 22 1992 rampage was propagated and initiated by the PKK members who organized the civilians to participate. Although, some sources including the Turkish security forces argued that the majority of the rampage participants were the PKK members (see for example, http://www.belgenet.com/dava/dava11.html), this argument is problematic due to the difficulty in distinguishing the actual PKK members from the civilian population in the rampage towns and cities, among whom there was a high level of support for the PKK.

time in the history of Republic that a mainstream politician with a conservative line declared the 'Kurdishness' of the *Kurdish Question* in public. This declaration showed the changing perception of the Kurdish issue in the eye of the Turkish state. Unlike the 1920s and 30s when the Kurdish Question was considered as a matter of uncivilized tribal politics, ignorant religious establishments, and/or tradition and pre-modern social structures or the 1950s, 60s and 70s when it was seen as a problem of regional economic and social underdevelopment (Yeğen 1999), the late 1980s and early 1990s showed that the issue had gained a conspicuous ethnic dimension. State circles realized that the 'Kurdish identity' could be political and mobilized at the grassroots, could turn into a threat for the subtle Turkishness of the state and could militantly demand radical structural changes in the state system and institutions. However, it was just because the radical nature of the Kurdish demands flamed the PKK insurgency, whilst the hardliner state circles were unable to develop social, economic and political measures to integrate the most vulnerable segments of the southeastern population that the *Kurdish Question* has turned into an ethno-political predicament in Turkey.

In 1994, local elections pointed out another facet of the changing dynamics of political identity in southeastern Turkey. The Pro-Islamist Welfare Party (RP) won a significant victory in the region after the self-withdrawal of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Labor Party (DEP) from the local elections (see for example Barkey 1998). Election results were an indication of pro-Islamist politics' gaining ground in

the southeast as well as across Turkey. The pro-Islamists have until today remained as a viable alternative to the pro-Kurdish politics as well as a strong rival in the local government elections in the predominately Kurdish provinces. This is certainly not surprising considering that both pro-Islamist and pro-Kurdish politics have been in tension with the central state structure and aimed to redefine the premises of the nation-state and civic understanding of Turkish citizenship albeit in different ways; Islamists challenge the secular Turkish state structure while pro-Kurdish politics challenges the national unity. Their 'anti-systemic' stance in secular Turkish politics gave the Islamist political parties a leverage to gather support from the masses that feel outside of the central state circles. Moreover, both pro-Islamists (across Turkey) and pro-Kurdish political parties (in the southeast) have managed to reach out to the grassroots and organize at the very local level in neighborhoods, in city centers and districts; something that none of the mainstream political parties have managed to do. Indeed, constituencies of the Islamist politics and the pro-Kurdish politics have overlapped with each other starting from the mid 1990s (see Öniş 2000, also see Ercan-Argun 1999).

Considering the upsurge in Islamist tendencies in Turkey in general together with the spreading influence of the PKK in the southeast, it was not a coincidence that fundamentalist groups, especially the affiliates of the Hezbullah[43], started to wage

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[43] Enmity between the Hezbullah and the PKK also caused forced migrations in many southeastern provinces, especially in the province of Batman bordering Diyarbakir. This research includes those people too. See footnote 27 for details about the Hezbullah.

violence across southeastern Turkey in the early 1990s. Southeast-based Kurdish fundamentalist organization mainly targeted the PKK in its competition for control over the regional population. In 1997, the pro-Islamist RP party already reached its heydays in Turkish politics and formed a coalition government with the center-right DYP (True Path Party) after the national elections. It did not take long for the Turkish military to acknowledge the symbiotic relationship between the fundamentalist and ethno-nationalist upsurge in southeastern Turkey.

Ironically, it was the Turkish security forces that subtly supported the Hezbullah during the 1990s and secured a space of activity for the illegal organization in the southeastern provinces as a counter-insurgency strategy against the PKK. In April 1997, the military announced a new "Concept of National Security Strategy" as the Internal security and Planning Department of the Chief of State declared that "national security guidelines shifted the perception of threat from outside the country to the inside: Islamic movements and Kurdish separatism consolidate each other." (Taspinar 2005: 235). Subsequently, the pro-Islamist RP was banned from politics in 1998, this time with an indirect military intervention. By the year 2000, Hezbullah was also repressed through numerous anti-terrorism operations against the illegal organization in the southeast and in western cities like Istanbul[44].

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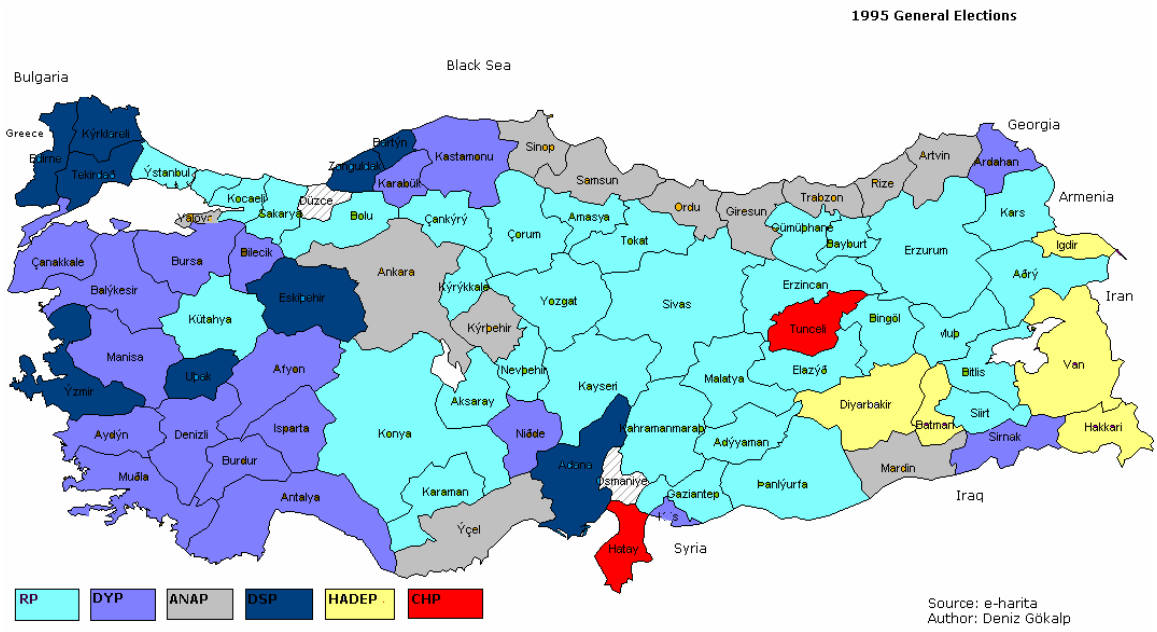
[44] Mehmet Faraç, a journalist expert on Islamist terrorism, argued that the Turkish/Kurdish Hezbullah was never eradicated, but just silenced. According to Faraç, the fundamentalist organization is currently looking for 'legal' and 'non-violent' channels to organize and get institutionalized. (Mehmet Faraç, *Cumhuriyet*, March 5 2005)

Map-2 *Dispersion of Majority Provincial Votes by Political parties in the General Elections in 1995*

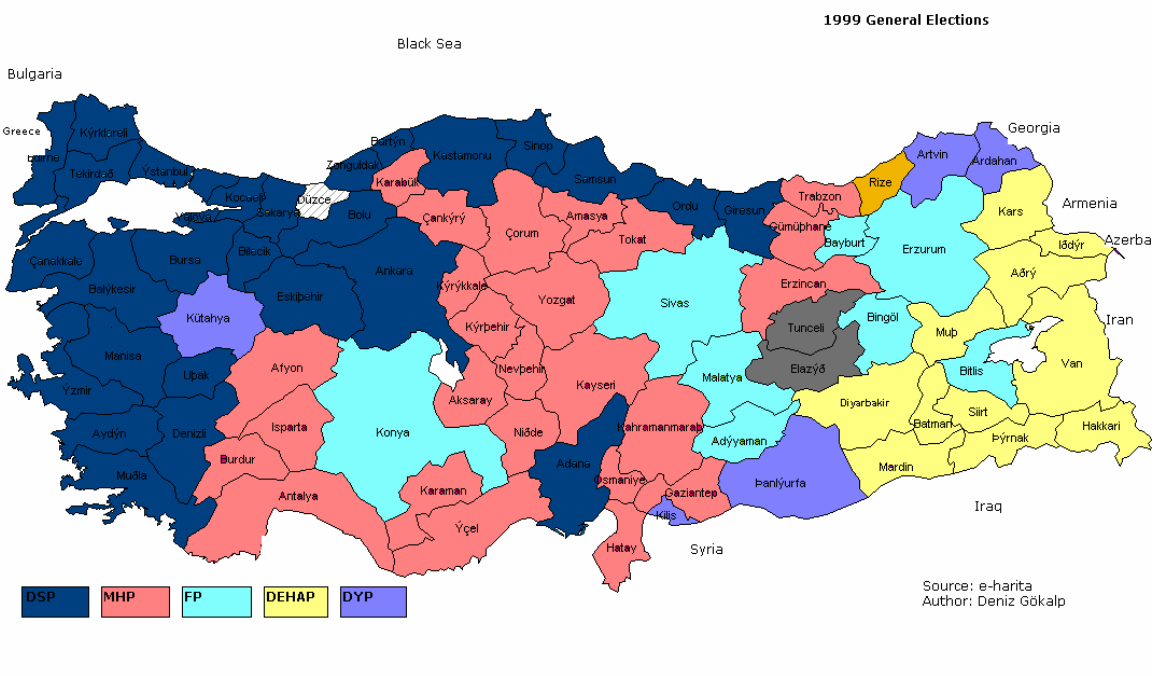


RP-Welfare Party (predecessor of Justice and Development)- pro-Islamist
DYP-True Path Party-centre-right wing
ANAP- Motherland Party-centre-right wing
DSP-Democratic Left Party-centre-left wing with nationalist tones
HADEP-People's Democratic Party-Pro-Kurdish
CHP-Republican People's Party-Center left with democratic, secular, Kemalist rhetoric

By the year 1998, PKK started to lose its strength as well as political and logistic support in Turkey and abroad. Turkish army had been constantly developing its technical competence to fight against the guerilla insurgency while local logistic support vital for the guerilla resistance had been cut off to a large extent with village evacuations occurred in actual and potential conflict areas. The guerilla units withdrew into northern Iraq and the leader of the organization, Abdullah Öcalan, with a Greek-Cypriot passport, was captured in Kenya after expelled from the country,

Syria that hosted him for about two decades. PKK declared a ceasefire following the arrest of Öcalan until 2004-the year that the organization ended the ceasefire under the influence of rapidly changing domestic and regional changes.

Map-3 *Dispersion of Majority Provincial Votes by Political parties in the General Elections in 1999*



DSP-Democratic Left Party-Left wing with nationalist tones
MHP-Nationalist Action Party-(Turkish) Nationalist
FP-Virtue Party (successor of RP)-pro-Islamist
DEHAP-Democratic People's Party (successor of HADEP)-Pro-Kurdish
DYP-True Path Party-conservative right wing

Between 1999 and 2004, there had emerged an atmosphere of peace and hope in southeastern Turkey. EU-sponsored democratization reforms in the areas of culture, language, freedom of expression and association enacted between 1999 and

2002 also contributed to the hope held by exponents of multi-culturalism who had a predisposition that more cultural freedom would bring stability and reconciliation of the Kurdish Question in Turkey[45]. Pro-Kurdish party politics also successfully retuned back to the election box in 1999. Pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HADEP- replaced the outlawed DEP) received only 4.5 percent of the votes and could not enter Parliament; still, won quite a victory in local government elections in the same year taking over most of the municipal control in southeastern provinces like Diyarbakir, Van, Hakkari and Batman. In the 2002 national elections, pro-Kurdish DEHAP again emerged as the major political power in the region despite its inability to send representatives to the Parliament due to the 10% national threshold that it never managed to surpass.

Sweeping success of the party in 1999 and 2002 indicated the strong local support for Kurdish ethno-political cause and reinforced the idea of the consolidation of the pro-Kurdish politics in the region. However, the 2004 local government and the 2007 general elections showed the delicate political balances prevailing across the southeast. Pro-Islamist politics, indeed not surprisingly, emerged from the election box as an alternative outlet for the local people in the southeast with its well-established local organizing as well as particular appeal to the conservative poor

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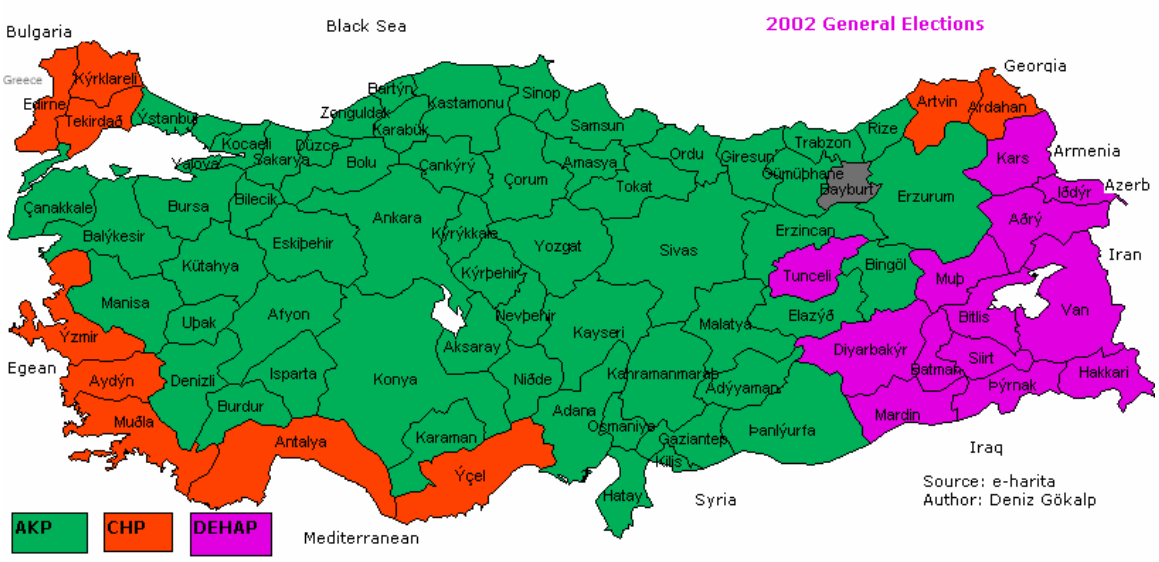
[45] 2002 the Turkish parliament abolished the death penalty and undertook substantive democratization reforms granting important cultural rights to ethnic minorities including the Kurds. The bans on Television and Radio broadcasting and private education in Kurdish were lifted (for details see Özbudun and Yazici 2004).

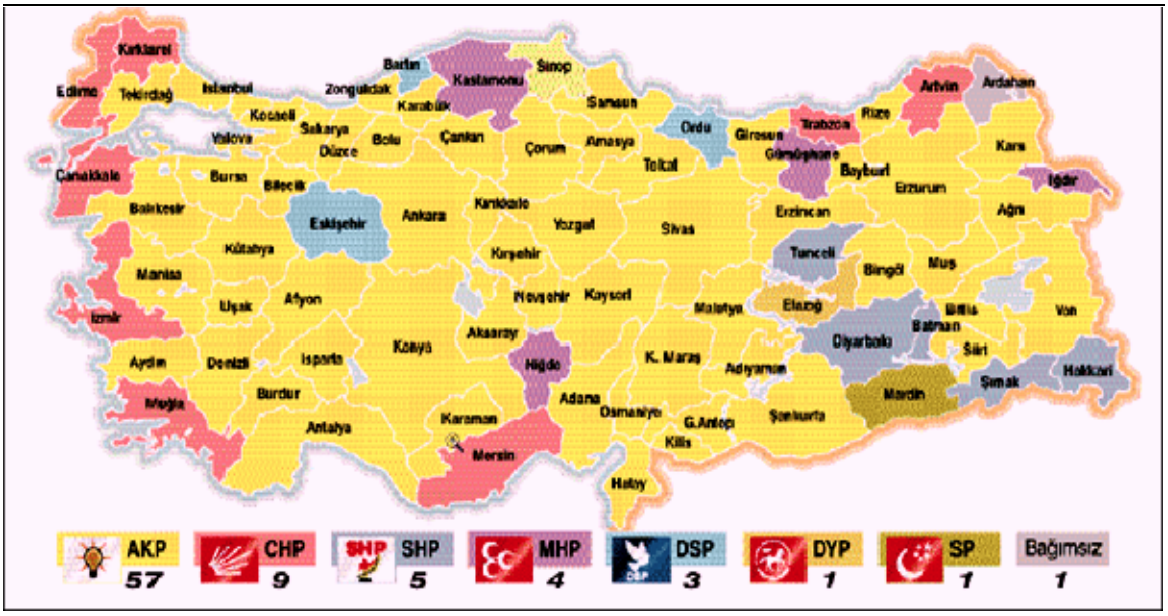
masses. The Islamists have in addition managed to achieve cross-class allegiances not only in the southeast but across Turkey gaining the support of conservative middle and upper classes in Anatolia (Öniş 2000). Although, the pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) was overshadowed by the sweeping victory of the pro-Islamists in many pre-dominantly Kurdish southeastern provinces in 2004 and recently in 2007; the party maintained dominance in its stronger castles such as Diyarbakir, Tunceli, Sirnak and Hakkari.

Map-4 *Dispersion of the Provincial Votes by Political Parties in the General Elections in 2002*



AKP- Justice and Development Party (Pro-Islamist)
CHP-Republican People's Party (Center-left-Democratic/Secular/Kemalist Rhetoric)
DEHAP-Democratic People's party (Pro-Kurdish)-The only legal political party in Turkey assuming representation of Kurds in Turkey)

Map-5 *Dispersion of the Provincial Votes by Political Parties in the Local Government (Municipality) Elections in 2004*



Source: Milliyet Newspaper, March 28 2004

AKP- Justice and Development Party (Pro-Islamist)
CHP-Republican People's Party (Center Left-Democratic/Secular/Kemalist Rhetoric)
SHP-Social Democratic People's Party in coalition with **DEHAP** (Democratic People's party (Pro-Kurdish)- *Provinces under its municipal control: Batman, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sirnak and Tunceli*
MHP-Nationalist Action Party (Turkish Nationalist)
SP-Felicity Party (Pro-Islamist)
DSP-Democratic Leftist Party (Leftist/Nationalist Rhetoric)
DYP-True Path Party (Center Right);
Bağimsiz-Independent

The atmosphere of normalization was replaced by further violence and political tension in the southeast with the PKK ending the ceasefire in June 2004 at a time that I had just arrived to Diyarbakir-- my field site in southeastern Turkey. This was just several months before the EU decision over whether or not to start

negotiations with Turkey for full membership. As I was expecting a 'post-conflict' context, I indeed found myself in an interestingly evolving chains of local events at the junction of the contradictory processes of 1) the newly opening democratic spaces following the lifting of the years long regional emergency rule between 1998-2002, 2) the starting of the official negotiations between the EU and Turkey, and 3) the restarting of the armed conflict and even more civilian displacement in certain distant rural areas. The local population was quite concerned and anxious waiting for 1) a reconciliation of the pro-Kurdish demands that predominately defined during the course of the events in 1990s including the ending of the conflict and the return of the thousands of PKK guerillas back home from the mountains[46] and 2) a systematic solution for the basic problems of the impoverishing urban masses including unemployment.[47]

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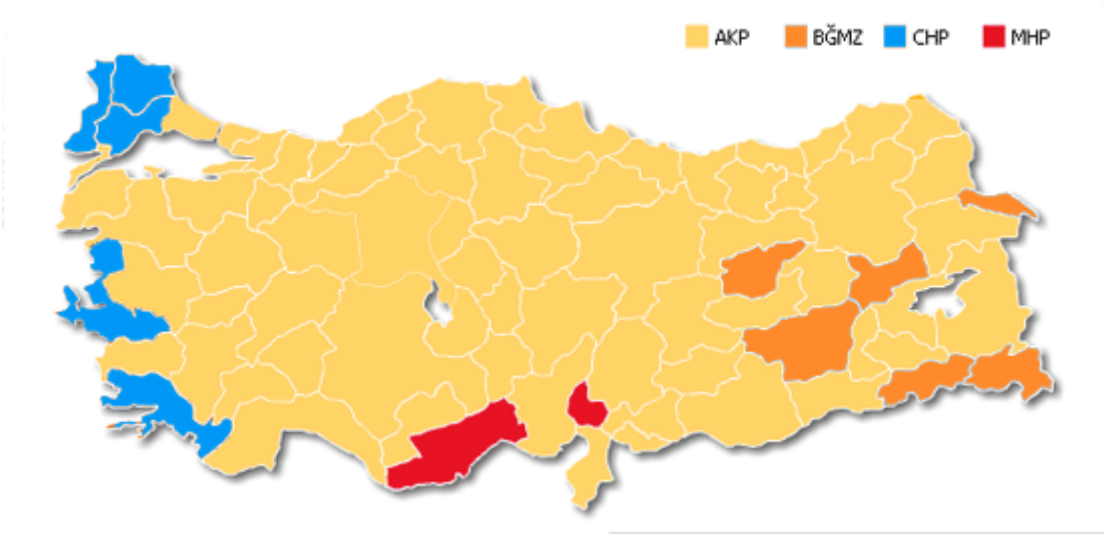
[46] Demands for 'peace' and the return of the guerilla became evident during my forced migrant interviews. Concern, frustration and anxiety were common especially in forced migrant families with relatives among the PKK guerilla. However, people's views on how to achieve 'peace' and under what circumstances the guerilla should be returned back provided a quite interesting picture as demands for 'peace' and reconciliation between the state and the PKK are coupled with more complicated claims with regard to the Kurdish identity, culture and language referring to discursively defined 'autonomy for the Kurds' and freedom for the arrested leader of the PKK. I discuss the details in chapter 5 and 6 and with a gendered perspective in chapter 7.

[47] These two main strands of expectations came to the fore during my interviews with the displaced Kurds and interactions with the local people during my fieldwork. Another major frustration voiced by my interviewees was the arrest of Öcalan, which many displaced interviewee perceived as unjust to the Kurdish masses supporting the PKK and seeing the organization as the only possible savior of the Kurdish people.

Map-6 *Dispersion of the Provincial Votes by Political Parties in the latest General Elections in July 2007*



Source: www.genelsecimsonuclari.com
AKP- Justice and Development Party (Pro-Islamist)
CHP-Republican People's Party (Center Left-Democratic/Secular/Kemalist Rhetoric)
MHP-Nationalist Action Party (Turkish Nationalist)
Bağimsiz-Independent (Pro-Kurdish DTP-Democratic Society Party- Candidates)

The renewal of conflict in 2004 proved the *Kurdish Question* to be more complicated than envisaged. More democracy did not guarantee the end of the conflict and political violence. Or is it even just the other way around; did more democracy bring more violence? In the Turkish case, it seems like exogenously introduced 'democratic openings' via Turkey's elusive EU accession process have changed the nature of violence instead of ending it (see for example MacGinty, 2002 for a cross-national discussion on democracy and violence; also see Bozarslan 2004 for a discussion on the Middle East). Starting from 2004, southeastern city centers

witnessed peculiar forms of violent attacks that the PKK and the Turkish security forces accused each other for responsibility. These newly emerging forms of-- what Bozarslan would call a kind of 'privatized violence' have been perpetrated by certain militant units (previously or currently) affiliated with the Turkish security forces and/or the PKK acting independently from their respective central decision-making mechanisms. As I illustrate in chapter 6, Kurdish guerilla resistance has also recently translated into urban radicalism, civil disobedience and violent and non-violent protest actions in city centers predominately inhabited by the migrants of the conflict years. The relationship between the grassroots and organized pro-Kurdish politics and actors including the pro-Kurdish political parties and municipal governments has been articulated into claim-making and civic activism against the state which I discuss in the chapters 4, 5 and 6.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING, POVERTY AND SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP IN TURKEY

Social and economic problems that the processes of armed conflict and population displacement have highlighted entail an engagement with the issues of distributive justice, employment creation, public investment and extensive social policy initiatives in Turkey in general and in the Southeast in particular. Conflict-induced economic deterioration in Southeastern Turkey due mainly to the armed conflict, political insecurity and emergency practices put the region in a seriously disadvantaged position in comparison to the rest of Turkey. Infrastructure, economic

resources, lands, crops, and forests were systematically destroyed during the course of the armed conflict by the Turkish security forces as well as by the PKK militants who targeted the strategic state investment including schools, roads, dams and irrigations systems.

Regional disparities between southeastern Turkey and rest of Turkey in social and economic terms have widened, albeit the consequences of the armed conflict have been suffered all around Turkey (see for example Kurmuş, 2006). However, all these conflict-induced processes did not happen in a void; rather socio-economic deterioration in the southeast has been aggravated by the changes at the domestic level if not caused by. Considering that the socio-economic situation and political position of the most vulnerable social groups in the conflict geographies cannot be conceived independent from the recent conflict-induced structural transformations in the region and also the broader political economic trajectories of the neo-liberal era; I explain in this section how domain of society and politics are tied to the domain of economy in terms of the instigation of identity-based politicization. This section is particularly important for me to show how Kurdish contention in southeastern Turkey has recently been turned into a debilitating social citizenship problem undermining the state legitimacy even further in the eye of the impoverishing migrant masses in city centers.

As I try to disentangle the politics and economics of the major developments in the recent Turkish history, 1989 marks interesting times. I mentioned earlier that

despite the conspicuous impact of the 1980 military coup for Islamist and pro-Kurdish politicization in the country; 1980s were rather an incubation period. It is important to note here that it was indeed the end of 1980s that pro-Islamist politics started to gain ground in party politics and Islamist violence became overt in public on the one hand and pro-Kurdish radicalism around the PKK in southeastern Turkey started to be a mass contention in southeastern Turkey[48]. Indeed if we acknowledge that secularism and national solidarity based on civic citizenship rather than ethnicity and religion are the basic premises of the Turkish state system, the political regime in the country came under a 'threat' with the ethno-nationalist and religious upsurge and that became evident starting from 1989.

All these developments in the socio-political domain are likely to be tied to the developments in the domain of economy as it was the year 1989 that the central government riddled with a heavily indebted economy moved to completely deregulate the financial markets in Turkey. This was the starting of a spiral down effect in Turkey's macroeconomic indicators and further deterioration in income distribution and social equity (Cizre-sakallioğlu and Yeldan 2000).

In the section below, I explain how economic deterioration has been materialized in Turkish society as poverty and socio-economic inequality while simultaneously feeding the contention in society including Islamist politicization and

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[48] Yeğen (2006) for example reminds us that the turning point in the recent phase of the Kurdish Question is the year 1989 not earlier. According to him, it was 1989 that PKK radicalism started to find mass support and turned into a mass civil disobedience in southeastern Turkey.

pro-Kurdish discontent. Increasing socio-economic gaps between social classes, distributional injustice, growing poverty and unemployment together with political corruption entrenched in the rapid economic transformation in 1980s, have turned into declining state legitimacy in the eye of the citizens as the 'corrupt' state abandoned the citizens gradually and insulated the political decision making mechanisms further from society. State legitimacy was in decline in the eye of the general society as "corruption rather than populism becoming the more appropriate term to describe the economic dimension of state-society relations" (Buğra and Keyder 2006:212). It was under these circumstances that pro-Islamist Welfare Party (RP) and consequently its extension, the pro-Islamist Justice and Development (AKP-current government) have consolidated their local support from impoverishing urban and rural masses.

Moreover, during 1990s, not only the poor and working classes, but large segments of the middle class found themselves plunged into social and economic insecurity that gave rise to social conflict between social classes divided by increasingly distinctive socio-economic contours (see for example, Öniş 2000, 2003, 2004). It was not surprising that in 2002 national elections, pro-Islamists declared their over-sweeping victory across Turkey except in the southeast where majority votes continued to go to the pro-Kurdish party (DEHAP). In the 2004 local government elections, Islamists grow stronger and even took control of the many southeastern provincial municipalities including the previously strong castles of

DEHAP such as Van, owing to their ability to organize at the very local level and appeal to conservative impoverished classes (see Map 3). In the recent 2007 general elections, the victory of the pro-Islamists in southeastern Turkey frustrated and demoralized the pro-Kurdish actors even more.

Socio-economic Transformation in Southeastern Turkey

In many transition economies, transformations of economic liberalization are assumed to accompany a political transition from authoritarian forms of state to democracy. This proposition is however not a straightforward one as is shown by the economically 'liberated' countries riddled with indebtedness, economic inequality, political instability and democratic deficiency. In the Turkish case also, consolidation of economic liberalization following the 1980 military coup has accompanied economic crisis and economic inequality between rich and poor, urban and rural, east and west; political instability, corruption, and rentier politics. The situation has gotten worse with complete financial market deregulation and further integration with the global capital markets starting from 1989 (Cizre-Sakallioğlu and Yeldan 2000). Transformation of the state structure based on neo-liberal rationality has undermined the redistributive capacities of the state; which in turn contributed to the increasing gap between social classes and geographical regions.[49]

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[49] I should also note here that despite the dearth of solid research on the issue, some academics argue that extreme army spending to finance the military operations against the PKK in the Turkish territory and across the Iraqi border caused economic instability in the country contributing to the devaluation of the Turkish Lira and the already high inflation rates (see for example Altan in Taspinar 2005:108).

The war in the southeast has further worsened the situation by channeling state resources towards military expenditures and introducing new decision-making dynamics- between the state bureaucracy, business interests and the military- that are insulated from society (Öniş 2000, Demir 2004 also see Cam 2005). Economic reform programs embarked on under the authorization of the IMF have forfeited long term development initiatives for short-term economic benefits and rent-seeking politics. Economic liberalization has not only created economic crisis, chronic inflation and economic instability; but also reduced accountability and transparency in the public sector, undermining the civic consciousness and organizing (Demir 2004).

The socio-economic situation in the southeast was particularly alarming during 1980s and 1990s. There had been state development initiatives targeting socio-economic underdevelopment that resulted in broadening intra-regional inequalities and feeding political favoritism in the region (Özer 1998). Along with the criminalization of economic activities including smuggling and heroin production, the regional economy almost collapsed during the conflict years, particularly in areas outside of the state-initiated gigantic hydroelectric project[50] (GAP-Southeastern Anatolian Project). GAP-Southeastern Anatolia Project- started initially as a rural

[50] In my encounters with the local administrative personnel from the GAP project-many were actually Kurds themselves working for the state, I was told on several occasions that in addition to its economic importance (including electricity production and agricultural productivity), the project also had a military importance since especially dam projects enabled the army to better control the topography and water accumulation closing down strategic locations to access by the PKK guerilla.

development project which has turned into a large-scale, multi-sectoral rural/urban socio-economic development project throughout time with credits coming from various financial sources including the World Bank, European Investment Bank. The state had optimistic views about the GAP expecting the project to produce development and employment opportunities for the local people. Contrasting with the region's economically and socially disadvantaged situation, abundant natural resources (i.e. land and water) have gained strategic economic as well as political importance with the implementation of the GAP.

The GAP project did actually help agricultural based industrialization in southeastern provinces like Gaziantep and Sanliurfa –both remained relatively insulated from the armed conflict pervasive in the rest of the region. Spilling over impact of GAP-related development in those provinces with agro-businesses has been evident with their relatively greater ability to absorb the incoming migrant population in their formal and informal economy. Large-scale landowners and big agro-businesses have benefited from the project to a large extent; however, the positive spill-over impact of the project in terms of employment creation and economic development has not been realized yet. The GAP project has ironically contributed to intra-regional inequalities (Özer 1998, Hürriyet, June 5 2005). Conflict-stricken provincial centers such as Diyarbakir and Van could not have benefited from those limited regional development sparkles as evinced with their limited urban economies unable to produce jobs neither in formal nor in informal economy. In the contrary, the

GAP project has further contributed to the intra-regional inequalities in the southeast and further distorted the socio-economic disparities originating from the traces of pre-capitalist feudal system in the region. (See for example M.E. Bozarslan 1966[2002] for an historical overview of structural underdevelopment in southeastern Turkey and Özer 1998 for a socio-economic analysis of the GAP; also see *Hürriyet* June 5 2005).

'Development' initiatives together with the distorted entrenchment of capitalist economy in the region worked against the well-being of the peasant masses in the southeast. The region has been a source of economic as well as forced migrations towards western Turkey up to the present. While migrations have displaced/redistributed the Kurdish population of Southeastern Turkey throughout and across Turkey, Southeastern Turkey is no longer the designated area where the Kurdish population of Turkey is concentrated, although the region is still predominately populated by ethnic Kurds. Ironically, GAP has required population displacement too due to large-scale dam construction in the rural. This kind of population displacement is called "development-induced" displacement in the mainstream forced migration literature. Certain rural development areas under the jurisdiction of the GAP administration have been located within or side by side with the armed conflict areas under strict military control during the course of the conflict[51].

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[51] During my fieldwork, I came across with migrants who were uprooted due to the GAP activities. All indicated that they were paid monetary compensation by the state for their property taken over by the project. However, the complaint voiced by these migrants was that they were not able to transfer the

Village guard system has been a further destroying effect to the regional agriculture as village guards in most cases do not engage in any other income generating activity[52]. Together with the village guard system, traditional tribal relations have been transformed into a different social structure organized around gun-power. Ergil (1995) points out that village guard system; in this sense, contributes to perpetuation of the traditional tribal system in the region with the guards' economic and social survival in the region are completely dependent on the Turkish army and the state salaries they receive as state employees.

What have been the further consequences of the 1980s economic liberalization in the southeast? In an interview with a Kurdish MP (Ali Ihsan Merdanoğlu, Member of Parliament representing Diyarbakir) from the pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP), I asked him to explain the specific reasons for economic underdevelopment and poverty in southeastern Turkey as a politician representing the interests of the citizens in the region. As a Kurdish politician from a wealthy pro-state tribe, first he told me about his family's years-long affiliation with the mainstream

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compensation money into productive economic activities. In most cases, while those people lost their agricultural subsistence in the long run, the compensation money was mainly spent on non-productive consumption including 'durable goods', 'weddings' and 'rent'. My unstructured interviews with the development-induced migrants are NOT included in my forced migrant interview data which exclusively includes the conflict-induced migrants.

[52] Village guards are expected not to engage in any kind of economic activity other than their 'state employment'. In my interview with Mehmet Acikgöz, the director of the Socio-economic development unit under the GAP jurisdiction, he stated that there was no state pressure over the village guards for not being involved in their previous rural economic activities, but it was the village guards' will to decide. His statement does not comply with the research and sources evincing that the guards in many cases are not allowed to be economically active even if they want (Ergil 1995).

political parties in Turkey during 1980s and 1990s including the Motherland Party of Turgut Özal that consolidated the neo-liberalization process in the country following the military coup. Merdanoğlu pointed out several problems with 'enormously generous investment credit programmes' of the Motherland Party during 1980s that were tailored for the local and national business entrepreneurs willing to invest in southeastern Turkey. The then government aimed to create a spirit of entrepreneurship in the region, and to reduce poverty and regional disparities between eastern and western Turkey projecting that new business would bring job opportunities for the local people[53]. Merdanoğlu continued with the following statement:

> You cannot expect these top-down investment initiatives to create a miracle in a region with terror and with no adequate infrastructure, no qualified human resources -you need to educate the people first to get them employed, right?- and with no entrepreneurial class with a culture of entrepreneurship- people who did not have a culture of business became businessmen. Can you imagine the consequences? Waste of resources, corruption and 'ghost' businesses….Capital needs peaceful decks to settle down, human resources and business ethic… (Interview with Ali Ihsan Merdanoglu, Member of Parliament from the pro-Islamist AKP, representative of Diyarbakir, July 6 2004, Ankara, Turkish Parliament)

During the interview, Merdanoğlu outlined[54] various political and economic factors in which underdevelopment in the southeast have been embedded. These

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[53] The same projections have also been made for the large-scale GAP project (Southeastern Anatolian Project) which has turned into a disappointment in that respect.

[54] He was also very cautious about not to say anything that could be considered 'politically incorrect' by his party. He refused to use the phase 'village evacuations' during the interview stating that it would put the Turkish army under responsibility, while in fact it was the 'PKK terror' causing Kurdish people suffer in the region. Merdanoğlu also argued that Kurdish people had all possible rights and freedoms

includes the armed conflict and political instability in the region, lack of public investment, political favoritism and political corruption, rent-seeking behavior in the business community particularly under the auspicious circumstances of neo-liberalism.

As economic deterioration and increasing socio-economic insecurities for the urban masses have been an endemic problem across Turkey, the specificities of economic underdevelopment, lack of public investment and joblessness in southeastern Turkey have been translated into rapidly increasing unemployment in southeastern city centers with predominately peasant incoming migrants from evacuated villages and towns.

Displacement turning into a Social Citizenship Problem in 1990s

Today's urban poverty in western metropolises as well as in the eastern and southeastern cities is cited as one of the most striking consequences of the displacement of Kurds during the last decade in Turkey. In fact migration from rural to urban areas, from southeastern Turkey to western provinces had already started mid-1950s with agricultural modernization and accelerated with socio-economic transformation that Turkey had been going through in 1960s and 1970s. Armed

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enjoyed by the other citizens of Turkey, including cultural and political rights. He gave himself and the other Kurdish MPs in the Parliament as examples for how Kurds can be proud of being a Kurd and still welcome in politics and parliament in Turkey. He indicated that what was needed in southeastern Turkey was an end to the 'PKK terror' and extermination of poverty that had tricked people to sympathize with radical ideologies (Interview with Ali Ihsan Merdanoglu, Member of Parliament from AKP, representative of Diyarbakir, July 6 2004, Ankara, Turkish Parliament).

conflict between the Turkish security forces and the Kurdish insurgents (PKK) has radically intensified the rural-urban migration from Southeastern Turkey in 1980s and 1990s. This new rural-urban mobility was quite different from economic migrations of the earlier years in social, economic and political terms. It is noteworthy to mention that poverty among the displaced does not refer to a static status[55], but extends to the other segments of the poor as well as to the mainstream society in various forms of social exclusion.[56]

'Displacement' is also a process that continues even after the physical relocation of the masses and reinforced by the debilitating forces of general poverty and social exclusion in society. Displaced Kurdish communities are, also, not distinct groups as they have mingled with various segments of the urban poor as well as other social groups sharing their socio-economic and political vulnerabilities. I construe the consequences of population displacement with its political implications, but also with its relations to the broader socio-economic changes in Turkey. In this respect, consequences of the Kurdish displacement have not merely been articulated recently in terms of political tension, mass pro-Kurdish politicization and mobilization especially in southeastern Turkey. Conflict-induced human mobility, urban

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[55] For their piece on population displacement and development, Feldman, Geisler and Silberling (2003) point out: "Despite the remarkable progress in the thinking about poverty creation and reduction, little in these discussions actually addresses the shift from poverty as a social status or condition of individuals, communities, or nations (especially in the peripheral economies of the worldsystem), to poverty as a social process related to development and displacement. Displacement provides a trace on impoverishment as a historically specific process embedded in particular institutional and political arrangements and interpreted through particular discursive frames".

impoverishment and social exclusion together with the agonies of the post 1980 neo-liberal era have also been translated into a social citizenship problem that contributed to the new face of pro-Kurdish contention in Turkey in general and in the southeast in particular.

Together with the adoption of neo-liberal policies since 1980s, social service and security nets provided by the central state have gradually diminished. Leaving aside its being an economic and political issue, poverty has turned into a problem that is only a partial responsibility of the central state. Moreover, not only right-wing politics, but interestingly left-wing politics have been unable to produce meaningful poverty alleviation strategies as poverty has become more and more embedded into broader market structures that are out of the central state control (Öniş 2000, Cizre-Sakallioğlu and Yeldan 2000, Buğra and Keyder 2004, 2006). Traditional Turkish welfare system[57]-- a kind of 'inegalitarian corporatism' favoring the urban population in the formal sector over rural and urban population in informal economy-- indeed proved its unsustainability in 1990s owing to market-oriented economic and labor force transformation (Buğra and Keyder 2006).

According to Buğra and Keyder (2006), three important pillars of the traditional socio-economic safety nets available for migrant communities collapsed in 1990s which rendered the formal welfare regime acutely inadequate; 1) rural-urban

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[56] Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch (2006), for example, successfully define poverty in terms of 'oppressive social relations' and social exclusion which is prevailing in society across social classes.

ties that previously created survival synergies for migrants in the cities (this pillar collapsed due to armed conflict as well as the declining economic opportunities available in Turkish agricultural sector nation-wide) 2) available informal housing (this pillar collapsed due mainly to the commercialization of public land and reinforcement of property rights after 1980s) 3) family/kin and neighborhood assistance mechanism (this pillar collapsed due mainly to mass impoverishment related to the other two developments above).

Emergence of 'new poverty' in 1980s has then happened in face of the collapse of the traditional informal social safety nets as well as the gradual decline of the social state. Subservience of the Turkish social state policies to the austerity measures of the IMF in 1980s and 1990s has further distorted the social state ability to share funds for social assistance to the poor (Buğra and Keyder 2006). Starting from 1990s, with distributional injustice a chronic problem and social equity deteriorating, citizens have become even more dependent on welfare provision because of extreme economic insecurity. However, the state's capability to be a guarantor of social rights has declined as part of economic transformation, urbanization and neo-liberal entrenchment.

Increasing salience of urban problems, urban impoverishment and unemployment prompted the mass support for the pro-Islamist Justice and

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[57] This includes free public education to all citizens and a public health and pension system based on one's employment status.

Development Party (AKP) in 2002 (Cizre-Sakallioğlu and Yeldan 2000, Öniş 2000). A fertile ground for Islamist upsurge was consolidated during 1990s. Economic

insecurities coupled with political insecurities have also reinforced the popularity of the pro-Kurdish party especially in southeastern Turkey where pro-Kurdish politics are well-organized. The pro-Islamist part(ies) had appeal to the poor migrant masses in city centers as well as small capital owners close to conservative politics. Pro-Kurdish parties have consolidated their power among grassroots especially in local government elections starting from mid 1990s.

Vulnerable and underprivileged urban masses (including the millions of conflict-induced migrants) have tended to support the identity-based political agendas as opposed to the mainstream political parties associated with the growing corruption and the increasing social and economic instability and insecurity of the neo-liberal era in the country in 1990s (see for example Önis 2000 as an analysis of Islamist, Turkish and Kurdish nationalist party politics in 1990s, also see Demir 2004). Ironically, Pro-Islamist politics have; however, already contributed to the political and economic problems of the neo-liberal era in Turkey. Whether or not it has succeeded in fighting corruption and political favoritism, the pro-Islamist AKP has created its own rent-seeking domestic business community affiliated with Islamist green capital around the world and further destabilized the economic and institutional environment in Turkey. The party has also adopted aggressive agricultural policies, a radical privatization program and state downsizing in social security provisions that gave a

fatal blow to the state security nets available for the Turkish peasantry and urban poor that are in the form of agricultural subvention as well as welfare provisions in health and education (Bugra and Keyder, also see Önis 2000).

However one interesting development was initiated right before the pro-Islamist AKP came to the power in 2002. After the 2001 IMF-induced economic crisis, the Social Risk Mitigation Project (SRMP) was initiated with financial support provided by the World Bank. This project in a sense marked the starting of a new era in the state's understanding of and approach to poverty, a 'universal rights' approach to poverty with a minimum amount of social provisions available to everybody. Therefore, a new concept of social citizenship was initiated not by the new government (as argued by some in Turkey to give credit to the pro-Islamist government), but rather as part of an international imposition of the globalizing understanding of 'universalistic rights' approach to social citizenship embarked upon by the World Bank, supported by the IMF and happened to be carried out by the current pro-Islamist government in Turkey.

Major complication is associated with contradictory implications of the implementation of policies to establish the 'universalistic' approach. On the one hand, AKP gathers support from the poor sectors of urban and rural population owing to its promise for an all-encompassing system of socio-economic security as well as from the big business owners whose interests are well served with the weakening of an employment-based welfare regime. On the other hand, what seems like a universal

welfare package available to all citizens could easily turn into a guise for further privatization in health and education sectors as well as a revoking of certain forms previously available benefits, in face of which citizens are forced to look for complementary private insurance (see for example Buğra and Keyder 2006).

What has been successfully achieved by the pro-Islamist government recently is the reinforcement of the public perception of poverty as the 'destiny' and 'incapacity' of the underprivileged individuals in a society (This is indeed very in line with the understanding of poverty as an individual problem in liberal economy). The twist is the conservative tones introduced with regard to how to deal with poverty. In this respect, a kind of 'voluntary' redistribution mentality is encouraged by the pro-Islamist agenda using the notions of 'social solidarity' and 'religious brotherhood/sisterhood'. Poverty reduction is cast as a matter of 'social assistance/aid' in forms of 'charity', 'benevolence' and 'solidarity' expected to come from family, neighbors and benevolent citizens. Therefore, 'society' rather than the state is expected to compensate for the socio-economic insecurities not covered by the 'universalistic' social citizenship rights (Buğra and Keyder 2006).

There is one other important political implication associated with increasing poverty and declining social state in Turkey. As the presence of the state in the citizens' life disappears, municipalities have become important social service providers across Turkey including the eastern and southeastern provinces such as Diyarbakir and Van. Changing role of local governments has emerged as a factor

counterbalancing the decline of central social state. As noted by Buğra and Keyder (2006:224) "while central government funds to the poor have declined, these types of assistance have significantly increased at the municipal level" since mid-1990s. Under the general socio-economic insecurity nation-wide, municipal governments have reinforced their significance in domestic politics as well as in the everyday lives of citizens all around Turkey.

Municipalities have also transformed their leverage over urban poor migrant communities into new forms of urban clientelism mainly developing concomitantly with institutionalization of religious and ethnic identities across Turkey through municipal government practices (I examine the case of the pro-Kurdish municipalities in chapter 4). Political parties that are highly organized at the very local level have taken over the municipal governments in the most recent local elections; pro-Islamists across Turkey including many eastern and southeastern predominately Kurdish provinces and Kurdish ethno-nationalists in strategic southeastern provinces such as Diyarbakir, Şirnak and Hakkari (see especially Maps 4 and 6). In comparison to the pro-Islamist municipalities, pro-Kurdish municipalities have had to operate with relatively limited budgets and deal with more complicated urban problems for which they have recently turned their faces to the international financial sources, particularly European Commission. Pro-Kurdish municipalities in the southeast have not only been perceived by their local constituency as benevolent actors able and willing to ensure socio-economic wellbeing of their electorate but also political representatives

to assert rights of Kurdish people[58] and to fight for political security of the local people against the local elements of the state. Political security is in this respect perceived as a guarantee for socio-economic well-being if not today definitely expected to be tomorrow in case the 'Kurdish cause' is succeeded.

CONCLUSION

In order to position my analysis of forced migration and political violence in southeastern Turkey within a broader political economic and historical perspective, I have provided a discussion of the political economic context in which the (ethnic) political violence in the southeast has been embedded since 1980s. The political and economic implications of the armed conflict have always been well-entrenched in general Turkish politics and national economic trajectories of the 1980s and 1990s. The implications and consequences of the conflict and violence are therefore meaningful in the national political economic context that I provide in this chapter.

Any type of identity-based radicalization and its consequences should be examined in relation to the major political economic transformations after 1980s. Ironically, identity-based political violence accelerated during 1980s and 1990s when Turkish politics and economy were going through a process of 'liberalization'. The neo-liberal era has underlined the discontents of democracy in a socio-economically vulnerable country like Turkey. Declining state legitimacy has translated into political violence (ethnic as well as religious). Dissemination of political violence among

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[58] Here, rights are mainly defined in terms of culture and language as I discuss in chapter 5.

civilian masses in the southeast has reinforced the state's declining legitimacy in the eye of the marginalized Kurdish citizens. Dissemination of political violence together with large scale population displacement in southeastern Turkey has also contributed to mass politicization among the grassroots.

So what made the *Kurdish Question* so irreconcilable in Turkey in terms of citizenship especially after 1980s?

One obvious development since the 1980s happened in terms of social citizenship. With the decline of social citizenship in the country in 1980s and 1990s due to neo-liberal restructuring, one of the most important integrative measures for the Kurdish citizens collapsed. I should note that in practice, 'social egalitarianism' discourse in social policy in Turkey was rather a form of 'inegalitarian' corporatism' in 1950s, 60s and 70s favoring employed urban populations over informally employed and also rural populations. However, free educational and health services were still state priorities and aimed to be made available to the majority of citizens. Social egalitarianism in social policy has particularly worked for the Kurdish economic migrant communities in western urban centers who were relatively more able than the post-1980 migrant groups to integrate with the urban social and economic life and find jobs in the formal sector. Marginalization and exclusion in this regard were rather in class terms than ethnic terms before 1980s (Erder 1995, 1996, 1998; Buğra and Keyder 2003, 2006; also see Yeğen 2006).

Since 1980s, neo-liberal restructuring has reduced even the inadequate forms of previous welfare provisions provided by the central state, whilst since 2002 a new direction towards a distorted form of 'universal social rights' approach has been adopted by the pro-Islamist government. I elaborate further on this point in chapter 4 of this dissertation. Political violence has further complicated the state's failure to accommodate the social rights of the displaced masses in city centers. Thousands of Kurdish migrants have been left by their own within the social and economic insecurities of city centers, a process complicated by global neo-liberal restructuring and the declining social state. As these politicized masses experienced further impoverishment, unemployment and socio-economic insecurity, their material deprivation and associated social problems with it-substance-addicted street children, prostitution and crime have emerged as a distinct face of the post-1980s *Kurdish Question* in Turkey. I elaborate on these socio-economic dynamics experienced by the displaced Kurds in chapter 3, and in relation to the broader institutional changes in chapters 4 and 6.

Second agony of the Turkish citizenship in the post 1980 era has been something unique to the dynamics of the armed conflict in the southeast. Here is a radical social conflict with an ethno-nationalist and armed face where sides may have lost their legitimacy in the eyes of each other as a 'legitimate state' and 'legitimate citizens' (analyzed in chapter 4). Adriane Kemp (2004) for example, calls the Palestinian minority in Israel as a 'dangerous population/alien citizens' from the

perspective of the Israeli state. Given that misleading parallels are drawn between the Kurds in Turkey and Palestinians in Israel, the two populations are indeed quite differently affiliated with their respective states. As Butenschon (2000:20) notes,

> whereas Israel does not intend to integrate or assimilate the indigenous non-Jewish population of Palestine into the core national collective, Kemalist nation building[59] precludes any ethnonational differentiation within the borders of Turkey…Those who do not accept this conception of national loyalty have no legitimate rights to participate in the life of the nation. The message to the Kurdish population of Turkey is clear: either accept that you are an inseparable part of the Turkish nation and be welcome as equals or face the consequences (such as forced assimilation, political repression, forced relocation). (Butenschon:20)

Therefore, in the Turkish case, it was the 'ethno-nationalist' separatist politics that has been targeted rather than the general Kurdish population. Citizenship has been conceptualized by the state in terms of loyalty and duties of citizens rather than in terms of the rights of citizens and the state responsibilities towards citizens. (see for example Keyman and Icduygu 2003). Citizens turn into a 'threat' when they fail to prove their loyalty and willingness to be subservient to the state interest especially when the state sensitivities in terms of national security and territorial integrity are involved. As in the 1960s and 1970s, socialist and communist organizing was considered as a national security threat and thousands of Turkish as well as Kurdish

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[59] I should note here that the Kemalist notion of 'Turkishness' does not refer to Turks as a race. Similar to the French case, the notion is based on citizenship and a civic understanding of 'Turkishness' as citizens being a part of Turkey regardless of their race and ethnicity. Despite this original Kemalist commitment to embrace the citizenry of Turkey as a civic entity without any ethnic divisions, certain ethnic groups have been embraced more than the others through state practices. I elaborate more on this point later in this dissertation.

activists experienced the state violence, since the 1980s, the threat has been defined in terms of ethnic disintegration in the country due to domestic repercussions of global and regional developments.

Citizens with Kurdish origin have turned into a 'dangerous population' whenever they 'fail' in the eyes of the state to prove their 'loyalty' towards the premises of the unified Turkish state. Thousands of Kurdish peasants have experienced state violence and discrimination based on the assumption that they were/are accomplice of the separatist forces as thousands of Kurdish peasants have been protected and armed by the Turkish military to fight against the PKK as 'loyal' state constituency. Therefore, ethnicity as a factor in the ever-changing citizenship practices in Turkey has been something beyond 'ethnicity'. I discuss the legitimacy problem between the Turkish state and the forced migrant Kurdish communities in chapter 4.

Deteriorating macro-economic indicators, increasing distributional injustice, social inequity and poverty further destabilized Turkish society and reinforced identity based politicization including pro-Kurdish ethno-nationalist contention. Indeed, the social, economic and political trajectories of the 1990s have highlighted three main societal problems in Turkey, 1) declining central state legitimacy, 2) increasing salience of identity politics threatening the secular and unified nation-state structure and 3) debilitating problem with social citizenship that justifies and reinforced the first two processes.

The other complication arises from the fact that the *Kurdish Question* has become a transnational issue with an autonomous Kurdish region in Northern Iraq that emerged right under the auspices of the changing power dynamics of the Cold War in early 1990s and a Diaspora in Europe and North America that started to form with economic migrations in 1960s and 1970s and politicized with political migrations in 1980s and 1990s. This means that regional and international developments are always ubiquitous and subtle enough to change the parameters of the Turkish state-(Kurdish) citizen relations with changing claims, demands and expectations on the side of the Kurdish citizens and concerns and sensitivities on the side of the state.

European Union accession process has also recently become part of any kind of equation with respect state-society relations in Turkey and brought in contradictory dynamics. The EU with a promise of 'European Union citizenship' and 'democratic openings,' and with acute sanctions to protect human and minority rights has in many cases turned into the only viable political opportunity for the pro-Kurdish politics to communicate their claims with the Turkish state. On the other hand, with priorities defined by the EU interests, the EU accession process has confused the elements of the Turkish state to deal with infuriating domestic issues especially with regard to ethnic and religious politicization supported by the international human and cultural rights discourses. During 1990s, within the junction of international and national

development, pro-Kurdish contention has gained more and more ethno-nationalist salience.

The rest of the dissertation deals with the specificities of the situation of the conflict-induced migrants in southeastern Turkey in relation to the general themes discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF FORCED MIGRATION: URBAN POVERTY in SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

Emergence of a Kurdish guerilla organization PKK and counter-insurgency of the Turkish military aiming to combat the separatist threat marked a new era in Turkish politics in 1990s. The 'low intensity war' hit hard especially the local population in conflict areas in southeastern Turkey. Between 1.2 million (official figures) and 4 million (unofficial estimates) Turkish Kurds have been internally displaced during the course of the armed conflict[60]. Predominately peasant communities displaced lost their subsistence through the course of displacement as destruction of villages, forests, farm-land and husbandry activities accompanied the

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[60] Kurdish population displacement also spilled over the Turkish territory. Hundreds of Kurds sought refugee in European countries (exact numbers are difficult to determine due to complications involved with RSD-Refugee Status Determination process). According to 2004 figures, there were also approximately 12 thousand Turkish Kurds in Northern Iraq. About 9 thousand is residing in the Mahmur refugee camp and the rest is dispersed in Northern Iraqi cities Dahuk and Arbil (Interview with UNHCR-Ankara, 12/22/2004). Several thousands of Kurdish refugees previously residing in Northern Iraq have been repatriated with assistance from the Turkish state and UNHCR up to present. Between 1997 and 2003, about 2200 Kurdish refugees were repatriated back to Turkey (Agence France, 2003). There have been no systematic repatriation and reintegration programs for those groups of Kurdish refugees as they have entered Turkey in small groups. Even though, UNHCR-Turkey states that there is not a significant socio-economic and political disparities among the groups of the internally displaced Kurds, Turkish Kurds seeking refugee in European countries and the ones residing in Iraq (Interview, 12/22/2004); the issue begs for further comparative research on these different groups of internally and internationally displaced Turkish Kurds. This study concerns Turkish Kurds displaced within the borders of Turkey.

activities of the Turkish security forces as well as the PKK guerilla. Previously marginalized Kurds residing in politically and geographically distant rural areas have found themselves in urban poverty and unemployment; mingled with previous economic migrants and suffered growing social and economic insecurity in city centers across Turkey.

In this chapter, I examine the social and economic insecurities of displaced Kurds in southeastern provinces drawing upon my interview data on Diyarbakir and referring to the general socio-economic context in the region. This population represents one of the most politically vulnerable groups of Kurds in Turkey due to their direct experience with violence and encounters with the regional armed actors (Turkish security units, the PKK guerilla and in some occasions the Kurdish Hezbullah). I discuss specificities of the social and economic problems that the forced migrant population struggles with in the provincial center of Diyarbakir. I also bring the pre-migration conditions in the places of origin and previously existing rural ties with the urban into consideration in order to compare the migrants' socio-economic conditions before and after displacement.

I explain that forced migrants in southeastern Turkey not only suffers lack of social and economic integrative mechanisms into city centers, but they are also caught within a general environment of poverty, joblessness and social exclusion that is pervasive in city centers across different migrant groups including economic migrants in the region as well. I point out that social and economic insecurity in

southeastern Turkey is not limited to poor migrant population, but is systemic in regional urban economies across social classes. Socio-economic processes of displacement have highlighted already existing social and economic problems including poverty and unemployment. Displacement has further introduced new forms of poverty that displaced Kurds are not able to deal with as opposed to their previous poverty situation that they had developed ways to manage at self-sufficiency level.

This chapter is important to show that conflict-induced displacement has been a peculiar socio-economic process in Turkey, intertwined with various other transformations in urban centers and contributing to changes in urban economy, social relations, labor and housing market. In this respect, while forced migration has its own unique mechanisms of social exclusion, impoverishment and disempowerment; its impact has spilled over the urban terrain including different segments of urban poor, formal and informal working classes. Moreover, displacement process has coincided with other forms of social and economic transformation in city centers which refer to globalization, market economy and declining salience of traditional social state as well as weakening traditional social safety nets. Degrees of impoverishment and increasing social and economic insecurities have been much more severe in the southeastern provinces in comparison to the western migrant receiving provinces due to socio-economically devastating

impact of the armed conflict and political incapacity to address the growing socio-economic problems of the region.

DISPLACEMENT AND URBAN CONSEQUENCES in TURKEY

While economic and social factors have driven masses of Kurds from their original places of residence towards western city centers in Turkey since mid 1950s, significant portions of these migrant groups have been well integrated into the general Turkish population through time (also see for example Özbudun's piece on political integration of Kurds into mainstream Turkish politics, 1996). However, this integration/ assimilation argument is mainly valid for the Kurdish migrations before the 1990s (Erder 1995, 1996, 1998; Ergil 1995). Kurdish migrations after 1990s (mostly forced and/or conflict-induced in nature) have different social implications in terms of urban integration as economic causes of migration have been replaced and/or dominated by the anomalies of the political situation in southeastern Turkey. And in the city centers with high levels of conflict-induced Kurdish migrant population, socio-economic consequences have been intertwined with political repercussions of this rapid and massive human mobility.

Starting from the 1990s, urban centers of Turkey have been unable to absorb the incoming migrants even in the case of the economically prosperous, industrialized provincial centers like Istanbul and Bursa (Erder 1995, 1996, 1998; also see Ayata 1996 and Şengül, 2003). This was mainly a consequence of the post-1980 neoliberal reorientation in Turkish politics and restructuring in Turkish economy involving a

transition from public employment to privatization and enlargement of the informal sector though outsourcing and subcontracting. Consequently, incoming migrant population lost opportunities in formal labor market previously available to at least some sectors of the economic migrants of 1960s and 1970s (Senses 1994, Cam 2005, also see Bugra and Keyder 2003, 2006).

While some saw forced migrations as an accelerated form of pre-existing rural to urban economic migrations, others like Ergil (1995) in his controversial research on forced migrants in several western and eastern provincial centers argued that economic factors such as unemployment and rural impoverishment were intertwined with the emergency rule situation and village evacuations in causing migration among the rural Kurdish communities. It was not until towards the end of 1990s that the general Turkish public, media and politicians began to see that many metropolitan problems such as poverty, deteriorating slums, increasing crime rate and 'street children[61]' in the western cities such as Istanbul, Bursa and Izmir originated from the impact of the armed conflict on the Kurdish rural population in the southeastern and eastern provinces.

Work done by a few researchers on the recent (after 1980s- conflict-related/involuntary/mass migration) and previous (before 1980s-

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[61] Although these children are known as 'street children' in Turkish public, majority of them are working children living with their families. Interview with Yurdusev Özsökmenler, Mayor of the Bağlar subdistrict under the jurisdiction of the Diyarbakir Metropolitan Center. Also see TBMM-Parliamentary Report for recent migrations impact on children and Altıntaş 2003.

economic/voluntary/individual and/or chain migration) migrant communities in Istanbul is outstanding in sketching the differences between these two groups of migrant communities in socio-economic, demographic and ethnic characteristics, in their survival strategies and in their ability to integrate into the urban setting (Erder 1995, 1996, 1998). This strand of research suggested that the new phenomenon was demonstrating the socio-economically destructive implications of the lack of rural-urban ties whilst in the past there had been a constant rural-urban connection to facilitate the socio-economic survival of the migrant communities in the cities and of their relatives left behind in the 'village'. As Erder (1998:235) notes "[t]he village has had a very important function in the urbanization pattern of the poor."[62] In the course of the armed conflict, this important backup system collapsed.

According to Bugra and Keyder (2006), rural-urban connection was one of the major social safety nets available for urban migrant communities until 1980s, which had compensated for the deficiencies of "inegalitarian corporatist" welfare regime. Starting from 1980s, a part of neo-liberal economic restructuring, both importance of the agricultural produce and the leverage of the peasants in politics declined substantially. Small peasants lost significant state-sponsored welfare schemes "in the context of comprehensive policies changing the way the state related to the agricultural sector mainly through revoking various programmes of agricultural input

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[62] The quote is translated by myself from its original in Turkish.

subsidy and output price support" (Buğra and Keyder 2006). Indeed, collapse of the rural-urban 'synergy' during the post-1980 period was not limited to the conflict-induced forced migrant communities, but rather a systemic phenomenon undermining one of the major social safety nets available for the migrant groups in urban centers for whom there has been so far no systematic formal welfare provision counterweighing their lost rural survival mechanisms.

Moreover, during the course of the violence, displaced population mostly arranged their migration patterns based on their concerns with finding a secure place and an immediate shelter. Although, they also relied on family and kin living in city centers in deciding where to go and how to settle, traditional family and kinship networks in the cities became less capable of accommodating the new comers who tended to be larger in number including women, children and elderly. In turn, supportive family and kin relations collapsed too leaving the displaced population without any traditional social safety net available. Those kin-based social safety nets had previously helped incoming migrants to integrate into the urban class structure filtering them through the socio-economic channels of stratification and integrating them with the urban society and economy (Erder 1998). Without those informal integrative measures, social exclusion has aggravated among the migrant communities and poverty has turned into an intra and inter-generational chronic situation (This was a non-transitional 'new poverty' situation as opposed to the transitional poverty of pre-1980s, Buğra and Keyder 2003). The upcoming analysis

has a specific focus on Turkey's southeastern region and is based on my six months fieldwork in the largest provincial center in the region, Diyarbakir. I empirically and/or intuitively support my analysis with my observations in neighboring provinces including Van.

SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY: THE CASE OF DIYARBAKIR

> You will not have any difficulty with finding migrants to interview. Here in Diyarbakir, everybody is a migrant. The native urban population is gone. (Migrant Interview, Diyarbakir, summer-fall, 2004)

The analysis in the rest of this dissertation is based on my field research in the sectors of Diyarbakir metropolitan center with high migrant concentration. Diyarbakir has culturally and historically significant position and geographical location. During the Ottoman times, the city was an important trade and administrative center (Acun 2002). Throughout time, Diyarbakir has preserved its central position in the southeast, particularly its being a center of Kurdish culture and of pro-Kurdish politics since 1980s. Especially after the takeover of the metropolitan municipality by the pro-Kurdish party in 1999 and concomitantly increasing democratic tolerance towards practicing Kurdish culture in Turkey; there has occurred a cultural revival in Diyarbakir. Supported by the basic premises of the Kurdish identity politics; Kurdish culture, language and folklore have become a new face of the city. Ironic with the limited resources of the municipality, between 1999 and 2006, Diyarbakir's pro-Kurdish municipality has spent million dollars on historical reconstruction, cultural centers, festivals and symposiums on Kurdish culture, parks with monuments and

landmarks representing the 'non-Turkish' aspects of the city (see also Gambetti, 2007).

Contrasting with its newly polished cultured face, many corners of Diyarbakir provincial center display an urban catastrophe. The metropolitan population of the province has been one of the most rapidly growing provincial center populations in Turkey starting from 1990s, characterized by spreading squatter neighborhoods outward the city center and increasing visibility of urban poverty. Diyarbakir provincial center witnessed in-migration from the rural areas of the province as well as from the neighboring provinces. There also reported substantial out-migration from Diyarbakir to the southern and western cities, and probably to Europe (TMMOB, 1998). The upper and middle classes including the educated and artisan groups started to migrate to the western cities with the start of the conflict, undermining the urban culture in the city center. During the course of the armed conflict, population of the Diyarbakir provincial center is estimated to have been quadrupled despite out-migration (Aker et.al 2005). Together with the increasing urban population, poverty and unemployment have reached to unprecedented levels (Census Data, see Table 1 in Appendix).

In 2000, the total population of Turkey was 67.8 million; the provincial population of Diyarbakir was 1.4 million; the 10^{th} in population vice among 81 provinces in Turkey. Again, according to the 2000 census data statistics, urban population rate was 60% in Diyarbakir; quite close to the national rate of 64.9. About

545,983 people were living within the official borders of the Diyarbakir metropolitan center in 2000, where the fieldwork for this research was conducted. Official unemployment rate was 14.2 percent in the province, the unemployment rate in the provincial metropolitan center was over 30% (DIE-Census 2000), though unofficial records and pro-Kurdish municipality estimates for unemployment were much higher in 2004 when I was on the field[63]. Again, according to municipal sources, unemployment rate in Diyarbakir city center was between 60-70 percent in 2006[64].

Central governments have been either unwilling or due to the military rule unable to intervene to provide housing, monetary compensation, educational and health provisions for the incoming migrant groups in the cities. Incoming conflict-induced migrant groups have been mingled with the other segments of the urban poor and earlier waves of economic migrants making it complicated to distinguish between forced and economic migrants. International humanitarian NGOs and the interested international community have not been given access to southeastern Turkey to help displaced population. The burden of the conflict-induced migrations has mostly fallen on the shoulders of the local governments that are not technically and financially equipped to deal with the phenomenon of rapid impoverishment, infrastructural deterioration and joblessness in urban slums[65].

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[63] Interview with Yurdusev Özsökmenler
[64] Interview with Osman Baydemir, *Radikal*
[65] In a conference on 'internally displaced persons in Turkey' in Istanbul in 2004, Diyarbakir's mayor Osman Baydemir specifically stated that urban problems arising from forced migration have been dealt

In the second half of 1990s, a few national NGOs including the Chamber of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) released reports on the urban consequences of the armed conflict, and rural to urban migration in southeastern urban provincial centers including Diyarbakir and Van[66]. These reports pointed out that southeastern provincial centers such as Diyarbakir and Van had been going through a 'ruralization' process as a result of the urban centers' inability to absorb the rural conflict-induced migrant communities (see for example, the 'Research within the Scope of the province of Diyarbakır, on the Social Problems originating at Regional Forced Migration' prepared by the TMMOB-Chamber of Turkish Engineers and Architects Association).

Social exclusion and marginalization rather than integration have characterized the nature of experiences of the recent migrant communities in Diyarbakir. Housing has been an alarming problem in the city since 1990s. In face of the shortage of public land to capitalize on, new migrants moved to outskirts of the city center into neighborhoods with no infrastructure and meaningful interaction with the city center. Local authorities (municipality and state-appointed local governor) did/could provide very limited assistance to the conflict-induced migrants in terms of housing/accommodation. However, because of lack of systematic state aid and local resources to allocate for displaced people, local authorities have been compelled to be

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by the local governments rather than the central government as the central government was not willing to deal with the consequences of the forced migration.

[66]TMMOB 1998 and TMMOB 1998a.

tolerant of the informal housing in the provincial city center during the conflict years. This local tolerance towards informal construction with sometimes humanitarian concerns led to irregular housing units including several floor apartment buildings without any safety inspection and adequate infrastructure. According to a recent report submitted to the European Parliament by the Diyarbakir mayor, there were at least 10,000 illegal housing units in Diyarbakir metropolitan center accommodating about 80,000 people in 2005[67].

Mushrooming shantytowns attached to the city centers are common housing patterns, which look like isolated villages with no asphalt roads, no sewage systems, no running water in homes and livestock living side by side with humans. Indeed, there had been a years-long culture of shantytowns (*gecekondu*-built in one night) in urban centers in Turkey before 1980s starting from 1960s. However, those informal migrant residences had been very well integrated into the urban culture in migrant receiving city centers such as Istanbul, Bursa and Izmir in 1960s and 1970s. As Bugra and Keyder (2006) argue this previous form of shantytowns in Turkey were substantially different than their counterparts in most abject conditions in Latin American countries and the other developing countries.

Shantytowns provided an important type of social and economic asset for the migrants up until 1980s. Informal housing was available to majority of the incoming

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[67] Report submitted to the EP by Osman Baydemir, 13 09 2005. A copy is available at http://www.diyarbakir-bld.gov.tr/

migrants in the form of public land that its informal expropriation by the migrant citizens was seen legitimate for the public and political authorities. Informal housing also provided 'wealth, income and security' for the migrants as they used the peripheral areas as farm land, rented their apartments to the new migrants and moved themselves up within the urban social hierarchy. Kurdish economic migrants had also benefited from this earlier form of housing opportunities available in the western metropolitan cities (Buğra and Keyder 2003, 2006).

After 1980s, together with the increasing salience of neo-liberal restructuring especially in metropolitan centers (Diyarbakir has just started to be a part of this process owing to the substantial reduction in the violence since 1998); new migrant communities lost their edge in the informal housing market due to commercialization of the public land by the globalizing business sector and increasing political intolerance towards informal housing. In 1990s, the term *gecekondu* has been replaced by the term '*Varoş'* (referring to gettohization); while gecekondu would indicate a degree of social inclusion and integration with the urban socio-economics, the *Varoş* refers to social exclusion as well as marginalization (Ayata 1996, Etöz 1999). Based on this last point, it is possible to say that rural-urban forced migrations in Diyarbakir during the conflict years developed in compliance with the term *Varoş* rather than *gecekondu* since the urban socio-economic structure was never able to absorb the massive in-migration and provide them with integrative measures.

I should however note that in the case of the western provinces such as Istanbul, in addition to poverty and social exclusion, the *Varoş* also signifies ethno-religious fragmentation in the city. In this respect, *Varoş* is the target of hostility coming from the rest of the urban population since it is seen as the source of poverty, crime, drugs, prostitution and all the other urban 'diseases' associated with 'ethno-religious' identities of its residents. The Diyarbakir case is analytically different than those cases of western Turkey in such that the southeastern province including its metropolitan center is quite homogenous in ethno-religious terms. Also, urban problems are much more severe but also ubiquitous all around the city center as opposed to the concentration of poverty, crime and illegal activities in certain sectors of the urban space in western cities like Istanbul and Bursa.

In western metropolitan centers like Istanbul, the problems of *Varoş* are tended to be perceived in terms of individual and/or group 'inability' and/or 'immorality' rather than as consequences of distorted functioning of recently changed urban politics and economy that excluded the ethno-religiously distinct migrant groups from the urban opportunities. In Diyarbakir, the local population is rather politically oriented in their evaluating the urban problems as structural problems associated with the war, the state neglect and ethnic-based oppression. Migrant groups in Diyarbakir in turn seem to be feeling less discriminated against and systematically secluded in comparison to the Kurdish migrant groups in western city centers (see for example, Yükseker 2006). In turn, in ethnically and socio-

economically more fragmented western city centers, social tension between the *Varos* and the rest of the city is considerably higher and analytically different than the relations between the squatter settlements and the rest of the city in Diyarbakir. Considering the general national picture, Diyarbakir by itself stands like a *Varoş* of Turkey in the perception of the general Turkish public as the source of the migration of the impoverished masses and substance-addicted street children as well as of drug trafficking, child prostitution etc.

The impact of conflict has transformed the physical appearance as well as the social fabric of the city drastically. Despite deteriorating transformation of the provincial center, there is a small business class and middle class in Diyarbakir whose existence is most apparent in emerging sub-urban neighborhoods as well as in newly built shopping malls, supermarkets, movie theaters, business centers, shick restaurants and hotels in the city center. It is the upper and middle classes in the city that are integrating into recently penetrating global economic restructuring, while the majority of the Diyarbakir population remains economically and spatially marginalized from the limited modern face of the city.

Spatial Distribution of Forced Migrants in the City

Two types of population mobility marked the changing spatial face of Diyarbakir in 1990s; inward mobility of the incoming migrant groups and outward mobility of the socio-economically better off to modern suburban apartment

buildings. [68] While, modern looking suburban neighborhoods for middle and upper classes emerged away from the city centers, thousands of forced migrants coming into the provincial center also settled on available land outside of the city center since the city was not physically able to absorb the entire migrant population.[69] While migrants with previous ties and/or relatives in the city managed to move into relatively central neighborhoods such as Sur and Bağlar; the most vulnerable forced migrant groups were left with the peripheral neighborhoods such as Aziziye. The later has remained socio-economically isolated with rural-urban hybrid faces and a population representing the most vulnerable segments of the urban poor as well as the displaced population. These marginal migrant neighborhoods also suffer lack of infrastructure and social services much more seriously than the inner city neighborhoods, which have relatively better sewage systems, roads and the advantage of being in close proximity to social services such as health clinics, schools and administrative bodies.

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[68] In addition to the marginal migrant neighborhoods, there are also newly constructed modern neighborhoods away from the city center occupied by the socio-economically better of segments of the urban population who leave the overcrowded city center. See also for example, *Bölgeiçi Zorunlu Göçten Kaynaklanan Toplumsal Sorunlarin Diyarbakır Kenti Ölçeğinde Araştirilmasi,* TMMOB, 1998.

[69] Interviews with the Mayor of Bağlar Municipality in July 2004. Many of the migrant interviewees in the marginal (peripheral) neighborhoods such as Aziziye Mahallesi stated that their houses were 'gecekondu' meaning that they did not have legal ownership. Not surprisingly, it has also come out in

Table-1

Subdistrict Populations based on 2000 Census Data and Distribution of Interviews across the Subdistricts

Current Place Of Residence	***Population Based on 2000 Census***	***# of Interviews with 'forced*' migrants***
Bağlar (Metropolitan Subdistrict-MS)	291,098	39
Sur (MS)	91,680	19
Yenişehir (MS)	163,205	25
Rural (Hazro&Egil) (Permenately returned)		2
Mardin, Adana & İstanbul		5
TOTAL (Metropolitan Center)	545,983	90
Diyarbakir Province (Subdistirct+District+Village)	**1,362,708**	**90**

* 'Forced' and 'Voluntary/Economic' Migrants are self-defined

Recently emerged peripheral neighborhoods with forced migrant concentration have received economic migrants in 1990s as well[70] (also see TMMOB 1998). Shabby apartment buildings of the inner city neighborhoods are replaced by one floor cells made up with carton and plywood in these marginalized surrounding neighborhoods with migrant concentration. My interviews conducted and my talks with the residents in Aziziye revealed that majority of the houses were

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the interviews that the displaced who settled in 'gecekondus' were not able to afford to rent apartments in more central neighborhoods.

[70] Interview with Yurdusev Özsökmenler

informal (which the residents called *gecekondu*). Those housing units located at the peripheries of the city center; were in the worse condition I saw in Diyarbakır. Plywood and plastic materials that they are made up with, according to the residents, did not prevent cold and wind coming into houses during the severe Diyarbakir winters.

Table-2

Causes of Migration stated in 'Forced' Migrant Interviews (Self-Defined)

	Year of Migration			
Primary Causes Stated	***Before 1984*****	***!984-1990***	***1991-2000***	
Oppression/Armed violence From TSF	9	12	61	
Violence from VGs	2	6	17	
Having family members among the PKK guerilla/militia	3	4	19	
Fear of PKK attacks	-	3	4	
Fear of Hezbullah	-	1	8	
Economic Factors*	5	2	22	
TOTAL	**9**	**13**	**68**	**= 90**

TSF-Turkish Security Forces
VG-Village Guards
*In the interviews where economic factors are stated among the primary reasons for migration, subsequent village evacuation and destruction, blockage to village visits by the TSF, VG obstruction of seasonal access to property are stated. These are the major reasons why these people consider themselves 'forced' migrants ('*Biz göçtürüldük/göçer edildik'/we have been turned into migrants, we were made migrants)* rather than voluntary.
**I should note that displacement is not a one-time act of uprootedness. This table aims to clarify and simplify the causes of displacement that are way more complicated than presented here. People's experiences with displacement (for example whether displacement was an individual, family, en mass phenomenon), ties with the original places of residence (for example whether people kept intermittent ties, regular ties, no ties at all) and/or any other nature of displacement process (for example whether people served as village guards, then quit and displaced and/or whether they displaced several times) vary considerably from one interview to another. Diversity and complication of the displacement accounts are not adequately captured in this table.

FROM RURAL TO URBAN POVERY

Based on the data I gathered, it is safe to argue that displaced Kurds have been driven away from rural poverty to different forms of urban poverty, deprivation and exclusion. The former was what they were familiar with and more capable of dealing with. The latter represents a situation in which they were caught up unexpectedly and with which they do not know how to deal. For example, settling down in the city has immersed the migrant communities in cash transactions with social needs requiring cash; they have to buy food that once they used to grow for their own consumption and many displaced families have to pay rent for apartments. New forms of poverty have emerged as food insecurity/food poverty[71] is one of the most serious and widely stated problems. This is something that many migrant families faced for the first time after displacement that may imply that food poverty in Turkey is mostly a product of 1990s.

However, at this point, it is important to juxtapose previous and current socio-economic situation of the displaced Kurds. Despite deterioration in their socio-economic well-being, a close look at the previous socio-economic circumstances reveals some of the major rural problems that the forced migrant population was struggling with in their areas of origin; that might be overlooked especially when NGO research tend to romanticize the displaced Kurds' original places of residence.

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[71] According to the Turkish state institute of statistics, food poverty rate in Turkey is 1.35 percent while poverty rate is 27 percent (World Bank 2005).

Pointing out the previous economic deprivation, Nusret, a landless peasant from a village within Diyarbakir's rural provincial areas, stated

> We escaped from the war happening in front of our nose…..[but] we were going to leave the village anyway, we did not have any land. There was no employment for us in the village. We would send the sons to constructions... I, myself, would go with them time to time…in other times; we would work on the others' land as laborer to feed our bellies (Migrant Interview, Diyarbakir, Fall 2004).

Table-3

*Socio-economic Indicators on Rural Poverty/Deprivation **BEFORE** Migration*

Infrastructre and Social Services Available in the Place of Origin Before Migration	***# of Interviews (out of 90)***
Working Primary School	54
Working Health Facility	10
Running water at home	11
Electricity	12
Asphalt Road to District center	8
Rural economic activity Was NOT enough to survive	35*

*24 interviewees out of 35 stated that they and/or other household members would go to the western provincial centers to look for seasonal jobs including construction and agricultural work before they were uprooted from the original places of residence (predominately rural areas). The rest of the 11 interviewee stated that their economic production was limited to rural activities, they were too not satisfied with the economic life chances in the place of origin.

Another interviewee, Muharrem, a relatively better off shop owner in Diyarbakir city center, whose village in the neighboring province Mardin was evacuated in 1993, after refusing to collaborate with the Turkish security forces as

armed village guards against the PKK, put his feelings into the following ironic words:

> Sometimes, I think that it was the only good thing that the state did for us in our lives; it drove us out of the village that we would otherwise remain there stuck with poverty as we did not know how to get out. (Migrant Interview with Muharrem, Summer 2004)

More than half of the interviewees (54 out of 90) stated that there was a working primary school within their close vicinity. When it comes to health services, only slightly more than 10 percent of the interviewees stated that there was a health service facility within their close vicinity (10 out of 90). While slightly more than 10 percent of the interviewees indicated that there was running water in their residence (11 out of 90), almost all complained about the quality and cleanness of the drinking water.[72] Also, only slightly more than 10 percent of the interviewees stated that there was electricity in their original places of residence (12 out of 90 in Diyarbakir interviews). Even less than 10 percent of the interviewees (8 out of 90) said that there was an asphalt road to district and/or city centers from their original places of residence. When I asked the interviewees whether or not they were satisfied with the output of their economic activities in their places of origin, many of them indicated that they were barely making ends meet and had to look for additional economic activities (24 out 90 interviews in Diyarbakir, see Table-3 for details). The answers to

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[72] In one of my trips to rural areas within the Diyarbakir provincial borders with TKV (Turkish Development Foundation) team on summer 2004, all three villages that we visited had good quality drinking water problems. The fact that the visited villages were relatively better-off villages with access to direct and/or conditional credit transfers provided by the TKV was puzzling.

these questions actually contradict the displaced Kurds' positive feelings and longing about the places they left behind.

Interviews also revealed that there was substantial seasonal labor mobility between the original places of residence and the western metropolitan centers such as Istanbul and Bursa. Some young men looked for seasonal jobs in tourism, but the majority of the seasonal labors worked in construction sites before displacement especially in western cities as manual laborers. Sedat in his 50s gave an account similar to Nusret's

> My sons have been working on the constructions in other cities. They have been away all the time. I used to go to work with them too. But then I would come back and take care of the farm in the village. After I brought my family here, we became even more desperate. Now, the farm is inaccessible. I started to work as a porter [*hamal*-manual carrier] here in Diyarbakir.

On several occasions, interviewees mentioned that men would go to Diyarbakir to work as truck drivers in others' trucks. Women would also engage in seasonal agricultural work in southern and western provinces including Adana (in the south) and Adapazari (in the west). This pattern of seasonal labor mobility in which the displaced population was involved before displacement has been also reported by recent NGO research done on Kurdish migrant communities in various provinces across Turkey (Aker et.al. 2006 and Kurban et.al 2006).

Poverty vs. 'New Poverty'

With socio-economic underdevelopment and under the low intensity war circumstances, there has also been no meaningful urban economic system for the

migrants to integrate with either. As my interviews revealed, majority of the displaced Kurds look for temporary and/or seasonal economic opportunities and survival strategies outside of Diyarbakir since the job market in the city has already exhausted its meager limits. Not only the formal economy, but also informal economy is quite limited with lack of any dynamic industrial, manufacture or service-based sector. Economic migrations have been intermingled with conflict-induced Kurdish migrations in Diyarbakir as it has been the case for the other major provincial centers in the southeast and the rest of Turkey. However, during 1990s, conflict-induced nature of population mobility became the dominant pattern of migration into Diyarbakir city center with few socio-economic opportunities for the incoming migrant populations (see for example, TMMOB report, 1998; Ergil, 1995; Kongar, 2000). On the other hand, the blurred line between economic and forced migrants in Diyarbakir remains as much an analytical challenge as it is for all forced migration research.

Seasonal migration of men and seasonal agricultural migration of men and women continued after displacement. Heavy manual labor jobs in construction and agriculture are currently the most common seasonal jobs that the displaced families financially depend on. Many interviewed families currently have members seasonally or permanently living in the western cities, who contribute to the family economies through the cash they send back home. They are mainly the young single males working on construction sites in cities such as Istanbul, Adana, Antalya and Bursa.

When asked to which city they send the young male members to work, the answer most of the time starts with "wherever there is a job" then continues as "Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir, sometimes Adana...[They] live in baccalaureate houses-*bekar evi* with the others… They cannot even take a bath for months." (Interview, July, 2004; Diyarbakir). Mehdi's account points out the necessity of seasonal work and rural-urban connection for survival of displaced families.

> My children go to the west to work on the farms. They used to do that when we were on the village too, because there was poverty. My daughter went to Istanbul with her husband before the village was burnt down. Her husband is a laborer, he works on the constructions… We have a small farm, but there has been no access to the village for years. We wanted to farm the soil 4 years ago, soldiers did not allow us to approach the village… 2 years ago, my brother went to the village one more time. He saw that everything was destroyed and there were nobody. There are still soldiers nearby the village, but they do not bother us anymore, we can now go there… We want to get some credit to farm… Yes it is a very small farm, but it is still something for us. I want to farm the soil during summers; I don't want to stay there all the time (Interview with Mehdi, Fall 2004, Diyarbakir).

As claimed by many, displacement was, in a substantial number of cases, not an abrupt act of thousands of people moving from rural to unknown urban places but rather an end process of an already started rural to urban mobility with a sudden disconnection from the rural under exceptional conflict circumstances. In the same vein, displacement not only refers to large number of involuntary migrants' ending up in urban centers with no economic opportunities to start a new economic livelihood, but it also entails the collapse of traditional economic systems and the loss of traditional economic activities for an indefinite time period due to a systematic embargo put on those economic livelihoods.

In most of the cases, displacement was not unexpected but rather something that people knew that would happen sooner or later. In many evacuations, rural communities were given an advance notice to vacate the villages within a certain time period. In some cases, they left the village gradually during the given time span. Some of them waited until the moment that the Turkish security forces went to the villages to evacuate. On many occasions however, people state multiple causes of displacement including oppression by the security forces, pressure to join the village guards, pressure from the neighboring village guard communities and/or pressure from the PKK guerilla and militia not to join the village guards etc.

Several interviewees, who migrated to Diyarbakir in the early 1980s with an intention to keep their ties with their villages and small farm land, identified themselves as first 'economic' migrants coming to the provincial center to find new jobs and then 'forced' migrants after the start of the armed conflict. With the start of the armed conflict in 1984, they lost their access to farm land and crops in their places of origin, -which they would access seasonally- as these areas were evacuated and turned into forbidden zones (*yasak bölge*); upon 'losing their villages' they have themselves turned into 'forced' migrants. Nazlıgül who migrated to Diyarbakir in 1980 said

> We decided to come to Diyarbakir… My husband was sharing a piece of land with his brothers and father. It was not enough for anyone. He wanted to find a job in Diyarbakir. We kept going to the village during summers for about 8 years to farm the soil… In 1992, the village was evacuated and burnt down by the soldiers. We are not able to farm the land for years… Now they say that it is ok to go, but it has been years that the land remained empty. Maybe the soil

> has turned into stones... you need to work hard to bring the soil back to its previous condition. We have no money to do that. (Interview with Nazlıgül, Diyarbakir, Fall 2004)

These previous 'economic migrants' have actually found themselves turned into 'forced migrants' as their access to a socio-economic backup was cut off and as one family started to financially support their relatives who started to live with them after the villages were evacuated. Sevilay[73] noted her parents' and parent-in-laws' experience with displacement as:

> I came to Diyarbakir when I got married to my husband. He had a job here… [Later on] his village got evacuated. His parents came to live with us. Couple of years after that, my village [meaning her original village before she got married] was evacuated partially, some families left including my father(s) [meaning her parents and brothers]. (Interview with Sevilay, Diyarbakir, Summer, 2004)

Indeed, displacement in many occasions has been a process rather than a one-time happening and has had spillover impacts in terms of urban poverty, affecting earlier migrant communities that still had socio-economic ties with the rural areas as well as their family members back home. Majority of the displaced Kurds had to and currently need to combine urban and rural economic activities to survive at a minimum subsistence standard. What is detrimental for many forced migrants is the fact that rural communities who had developed survival strategies combining rural

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[73] Sevilay is one of the few 'economic migrants' that I conducted brief unstructured interviews in Diyarbakir. I met her in a municipality-run laundry house when I was conducting an interview with a 'forced migrant' woman. Sevilay defined herself as 'we are not like them' trying to make a clear distinction between herself (her family) and the 'displaced' woman that I had just interviewed. Sevilay's interview is not included in my formal 'forced migrant' interview sample.

and urban economic activities before migration through seasonal jobs in the construction sector, industrial agriculture in Western Turkey or tourism sectors in the coastal regions of Turkey end up in the urban centers with no ties with their rural livelihoods and most of the time are unable to create a permanent urban socio-economic subsistence.

Table-4

CURRENT *Economic activity in Diyarbakir and availability of access to rural economic activity*

		Interviewee
Seasonal farming on their own farm	*13*	
State Employee		3
Retired*		2
Small Shop owner		8
Seasonal Cons. Laborer**		15
Seasonal farm Laborer**		3
Porter (manual carrier)**		5
Street Seller**		6
Driver**		1
Works at a shop, restaurant, Coffee shop**		4
Manufacture worker**		2
Municipality worker		4
Work at home (handcraft) & Domestic labor**		5
Doesn't look for jobs		23
Unemployed (presently)		9
*Children working on street****	*8*	
TOTAL		***90***

+In some cases, interviewees indicated more than one economic activity engaged temporarily and/or seasonally. This table tends to simplify the general picture
**This implies regular monthly retirement pension for previous state employees*
*** These occupations, generally speaking, refer to irregular employment and/or underemployment.*
****This is the number of interviewees who stated that there were children in the household working as primary or secondary income generators. Child labor tends to be underreported by the families.*

Table-5

Proportion of Employed Population by Economic Activity based on 2000 Census
(Diyarbakir Metropolitan Center)

	Male	*Female*	*Total Pop.*
Labor Force Participation	%59	%11	
Agriculture	%2	%3	
Service	%76	%89	
Industry	%11	%8	
Construction	%11	-	
Unemployed	%27.7	%44.6	%30.3

Source: 2000 Census Data

Table-6

Displaced Women in Resource and Income Creation

Doesn't work	22
Domestic cleaner	4
Seasonal farm worker (on others farm)	2
Works for municipality (cleaning)	2
Handcraft at Home	3*
Sales worker	1
(Textile) workshop worker	1
TOTAL # women interviewed	**34**

*One of the three also works for the municipality

As new needs and new forms of deprivation appeared, many migrant families remained unable to find support and develop economic survival strategies in Diyarbakir provincial center. This is not only a consequence of structural joblessness in southeastern provincial centers, but also associated with sometimes incapacity and

sometimes unwillingness of displaced population to embrace a new life style that they are not familiar with. The mayor of a sub-district under the jurisdiction of Diyarbakir metropolitan municipality stated that involuntary migrants could not be involved in productive urban economic activities; first because, "they do not know how to be urban entrepreneurs", second "they are not interested in becoming urban entrepreneurs". She noted that

> These are rural people, they are peasants, they do not know how to live in cities, neither are they interested in learning the urban culture. The simple example is that they never lived in apartment buildings before, now they do. They did not do anywork other than peasantry before, now they need to find out economic survival strategies in the city… [T]hey think about their village, and possibilities to go back. This hinders people's willingness to integrate into the city. (Interview with Yurdusev Özsökmenler, the Mayor of Bağlar, affiliated with the pro-Kurdish party DEHAP, subdistrict, Diyarbakir, summer 2004)

On the one hand, the mayor's evaluation of the displaced population has some political overtones. It has turned into a political strategy for the organized Kurdish groups to put an emphasis on 'return' in order to keep the image of destitute 'Kurdish homeland' alive- which is discussed in the upcoming chapters in terms of the politicization of the discourse of 'migration' by the pro-Kurdish politicians. The discourse of 'return to homeland' is therefore actively exploited by the pro-Kurdish actors despite the contradictory research results that have shown that the majority of the displaced is unwilling to permanently return (Aker et.al. 2006 My interview data also support the argument that displaced Kurds tend to prefer to stay in city centers). Contradicting the current abject conditions in which they live and the prevalence of

poverty and unemployment among them, many displaced Kurds wish to stay in the urban center permanently for various reasons ranging from previous poverty in the original places of residence to the fear of re-displacement (the general tendency is however, to re-establish ties with rural areas left continuing to stay in the current place of residence-this I discuss below).

On the other hand, the mayor's statement is still important to explicate. Despite the general willingness to stay in the current place, socio-economic integration of displaced migrants with the city remains a challenge since many of them lack access to urban jobs and displaced still tend to perceive their main possible economic activity as farming. Currently, there is a public center in the neighborhood of *450 Evler*, working under the state's 'Social Services Administration" (*Sosyal Hizmetler Müdürlüğü*), providing supplementary high school courses for the youth, literacy classes for women and regular food aid to residents. The entire neighborhood is occupied by forced migrants from the same provincial town of Lice that was evacuated almost completely in early 1990s. In collaboration with the Diyarbakir Chamber of Trade, the center also provides work opportunities to the interested residents including a market-oriented 'Silkworm breeding' business in which there has been almost no interest since the starting of the project. The public center director told me that the residents claimed that they were not familiar with the job. The center's female director upset with the residents stated

> I tell them that they will earn much more if they start doing this work. We provide everything including training, space, market and transportation of the

> final product. The only thing they need to do is to feed the silkworm at certain times a day. We even provide the leaves to feed the worm. No investment necessary, no risk associated. But they prefer to go to Adapazari[74] to work under the sun on somebody else's farm as laborers. Because this is what they know and what they are accustomed to do (Director, 450 Evler Public Center, Interview, fall 2004).

In this respect, migrants who used to work on the farm in rural areas try to use the same methods to deal with the new circumstances. The new urban poverty in which they have been caught up is a structural challenge against which they are not capable of finding and/or creating economic survival strategies. Lack of social support nets as a consequence of distorted family relations in the aftermath of the armed conflict, displacement and loss of family members further contribute to the socio-economic vulnerabilities of the displaced. Children working on the street as petty sellers and garbage collectors have turned into one of the most important cash resources for many displaced families. Exploitation of child labor has emerged as one of the major urban problems caused by conflict-induced migrations not only in Diyarbakir but also in western cities such as Istanbul and Bursa (Aker et.al. 2006). Together with urbanized child labor; a significant increase has been reported in other forms of related social problems in Diyarbakir, including drug abuse among children, child trafficking and child prostitution. According to the 2003 statistics released by the Social Services and Child Protection Administration, there were then about 30,000 children working on the street in Diyarbakir. About half of them were

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[74] A province in northwestern Turkey.

substance addicts[75]. Displacement has brought impoverishment, and impoverishment in turn has increased various other social risks particularly among children and women.

Hanging on with Relatives

Particular destination decisions were based on the social networks and/or economic relations established with certain locations before displacement. Displaced groups with previous linkages with Diyarbakir have settled down in more central neighborhoods. Some of them had already bought the apartments in which they currently live when they were in the village. Some of them had a close family member having a temporary or permanent residence in Diyarbakir before the entire family got uprooted. Many conflict-induced migrants have tended to settle down close to their relatives and fellow villagers. The general pattern is extended family formations with more than one nuclear family living together including the parents, children, married male children with wives and children, the elderly and sometimes the widowed with children. In some cases, throughout time, some extended families have scattered across the city and away from their previous social networks. As two migrants noted

> When we first came, we moved in with my uncle and his family. They already had an apartment in Diyarbakir center. We lived all together for about three years. Then we moved out from their place…

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[75] According to the Parliamentary Commission on street children, half of the entire street children in Turkey are in Diyarbakir. http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/sokak_cocuklari_kom/

> We were five brothers when we came to the Diyarbakir center. We lived together for a while, later on, two of my brothers moved out to their own apartments. But they still live in the same neighborhood.

Lack of systematic assistance programs for displaced communities and urban poor and the incompetence of the social service provisions for marginalized social groups leave the informal channels of support such as kinship networks and neighbors as the only resources that people can mobilize for assistance. Still, kinship and familial relations most of the time fall short in meeting the needs of the displaced families.

> My family did not become village guards, so that we left… We had relatives in Diyarbakir… we came here and stayed all together… I go to work on constructions with my sons, my brother and his sons. It is always good to be close to the relatives even if they cannot help you a lot.
>
> My villagers are in a desperate situation. Most of them work as laborers and [manual carriers] porters [*Hamal*]. They would help us if they could, but under these difficult circumstances, people barely feed their bellies. Nobody can help each other.

Despite their pessimism, displaced Kurdish families tend to keep their ties with extended family networks as well as with fellow villagers. Losing those social relations are seen as endangering the social, cultural and emotional well-being of the family members.

> Despite everything that happened to us, we need to stand together as relatives and support each other as much as we could.
>
> We [the former villagers] are all scattered around Diyarbakir. But we try to come together at least in the weddings and funerals to be together to share the happiness and sorrow.

My siblings are the only people that I can depend on. We all try to do our best for each other.

We barely survive with the help of the neighbors.

My uncle bought us this apartment. Without him, we would be on the street.

Everybody knows that they cannot expect any help from the others. People around us are all desperate. But at the end of everything, I know that it is my relatives that I can turn to if there is an emergency situation.

Table-6

Active and Potential *Resources Available for the Displaced Families to mobilize for Survival*

Financial, food and social assistance to rely on	*Interviewees*
Kinship Networks*	58
Neighbors	6
Municipality	12
DEHAP-'the party'	15
NGOs** (Migrants' Association, Human Rights Association, Bar Association, Women's organizations etc)	27
Monthly Salary (Social Security& Retirement Fund)	5
Temporary social assistance (Social Solidarity Fund, Poverty Fund)	12
ECHR***	28
TOTAL	**90**

*8 interviewees particularly stated that their family members living separately would send them money on a more or less regular basis. These are predominately brothers and sons living in Istanbul, Izmir, Germany and Sweden (except in one case where the financial supporter was the married daughter of the family).
**These are the NGOs mainly providing legal assistance for the displaced. In few cases, interviewees stated that they received food and monetary assistance from the Migrants' Association.
***Received or waiting for monetary compensation from the State via European Court for Human Rights

Table-7

Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities

Insecurities stated in interviews	
Unemployment/ Underemployment / Joblessness	49
Food insecurity	34
Lack of Access to Health services & medicine	52
Housing	51
Relatives cannot help	33
Inability to send the children to school	27
Increase in problems among the family members (including domestic violence)	11
TOTAL	**90**

Kinship networks were particularly important to displaced Kurds during their first settling in Diyarbakir, two or three nuclear families tended to came together to support each other as they previously would do especially in rural areas and villages. Many however, reported that the extended families with more than two brothers and parents together had to split up over the years, find their own housing and figure out their own economic survival strategies. Interestingly, the main reason for splitting up was given as impoverishment and the collective inability to accommodate large number of people together. Samet 34 year old displaced migrant previously living with his brother noted that he and his brother would look for jobs together and work together to support their wives and a growing number children in the same household

before displacement. “He would find a job and I would go with him; I would find a job and he would go with me. We came to Diyarbakir and moved in together… After a while, we were desperate, [there were] no jobs anywhere… we realized that we were no use to each other… our suffering grew not diminish as we tried to cling on each other…My wife and I decided to move out taking our children with us…We could not go far away, we are still in the same neighborhood.” Kin relations seem to maintain their social and cultural importance for the displaced migrants; however, they do not provide a meaningful support system anymore. Despite the declining salience of supportive kinship relations, about 2/3 of the displaced interviewed indicated that kinship networks were the primary source of informal social security that they could rely on when they needed.

Accommodating the Displaced and Welfare State

The displaced have had access to certain forms of social security and provisions together with other segments of the urban poor. About half of the displaced families I interviewed in Diyarbakir (44 out 90) had ‘Green Cards’ and/or family members with Green Cards that enable them to access free health care. About one third of the interviewees indicated that they received ‘annual direct income support to farmers’ at least once since they got displaced even if they did not use the income for agricultural production. While very few (5 out of 90) indicated that they had regular income in the form of social security and retirement funds for state employees, slightly more people (12 out of 90) stated that they had received

temporary cash, food and fuel assistance from the state's Social Assistance and Solidarity Fund (*Sosyal Yardimlasma ve Dayanisma Fonu*) and Poverty Fund (*Fakir Fukara Fonu*). A recently released extensive NGO research results have also revealed that

> Despite the lack of specific projects addressing the current conditions of the displaced, many IDPs [Internally Displaced Persons] have benefited from a number of nationwide programmes targeting the poorest segments of the Turkish population. Chief among these is the "green card" which provides free health care and medication[76] to the poor; one time only food, fuel, clothing, stationary and cash grants given by the local chapters of the Social Aid and Solidarity Fund; bi-monthly conditional cash transfers to families who keep their children in school and have their vaccinations done regularly [*World Bank financed project*]; and annual direct income support to farmers independent of agricultural production. In addition, some social services have become available for IDP children working on the streets in Ankara, Istanbul and Diyarbakir in the past few years and their families have been enrolled in the above-mentioned conditional cash transfer programme. (TESEV report 2006:27, parenthesis added by myself).

The TESEV report further states that more than 3 million people in Turkey's eastern and southeastern provinces have the 'green card' among a total of 10 million card holders across the nation. Considering the population distribution across regions as well as the population living in poverty in each region, the report notes that access to the green card is widespread in the conflict region as well as among the displaced Kurdish population. The same is also reported for the 'annual direct income support to farmers' that appears as an accessible income source for many displaced families even if there are certain impediments involved in people's claiming undocumented

land and in utilizing the income for productive economic activities (TESEV 2006, also see my discussion above in this chapter, p:19-20).

There are however complications arising from the specific circumstances of the displaced population. Although, most of the interviewees indicated that they and their family members had identification cards, there was one occasion when the interviewee indicated that they were unable to receive the green card because the family members had lost their ID cards during displacement. This family was unable to renew their ID cards because they could not prove their residency. They needed to get their residency documents from the headman in their original place of residence; however, the headman was a village guard with whom they had a hostile relationship. Some resources and NGO reports also point out that displaced people have been unable to receive the 'Green Card' since they have lost their ID cards during displacement and have not renewed them due to their concerns over approaching state representatives including the headmen. (IDP Project, Norwegian Refugee Commission, 2004-5, Human Rights Watch Reports etc.). With regard to the direct agricultural income support, there are also problems. Due to poverty and lack of access to agricultural land, agricultural direct income support cannot be turned into productive agricultural activity and is spent for more immediate needs such as food, rent and paying off debt. Centralized social state benefits are therefore not adequate to

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[76] In fact, Green Card is limited to the health care and does not cover medicine (see for example Buğra and Keyder 2006).

accommodate the most vulnerable segments of the poor. Not only the displaced population, but rather different social groups with specific vulnerabilities should be included in policy initiatives through specific arrangements.

After the 2001 IMF-induced economic crisis, the Social Risk Mitigation Project (SRMP) was initiated by the state with financial support provided by the World Bank in order to reduce the burden of impoverishment falling on shoulders of growing number of rural and urban poor by providing social assistance; and therefore, to compensate for the declining capability of the central state to care for those masses. As noted by the TESEV report above, many displaced families and their children have been enrolled for the cash transfer programme under the jurisdiction of the SRMP. The micro-credit programme of Muhammed Yunus, aiming to encourage productive economic activities for poor masses and food banks to distribute free food stuff to the poor families were also initiated recently by the AKP government under the jurisdiction of the state's social assistance fund-the Fund for the Encouragement of Social Cooperation and Solidarity.

As Bugra and Keyder (2006) are inclined to see the social assistance practices as a new chance to reinforce rights-based perspective in social state, I am inclined to construe those practices as a poverty management, rather than a poverty reduction strategy. Indeed, available research shows that displaced Kurds (who constituted the rural poor before displacement) in Diyarbakir as well as in western centers such as Istanbul have had access to available social state provisions on a relatively equal basis

as other segments of the urban poor. The concern arising is associated with the fact that social service provisions fall substantively short of covering the majority portion of the poor population and meeting the basic needs of the poor[77]. Indeed, processes of displacement have been intertwined with social, economic and political processes of rural and urban impoverishment in Turkey, which seem to be embedded in neo-liberal economic and political restructuring including urban transformation, and are difficult tackle with social policies solely.

There is an imperative political implication associated with increasing poverty and declining social state. As the presence of the state in the citizens' life disappears municipalities have become important social service providers across Turkey including the eastern and southeastern provinces such as Diyarbakir and Van. Municipalities have transformed their leverage over urban poor migrant communities into new forms of urban clientelism mainly developing concomitantly with institutionalization of religious and ethnic identities across Turkey through municipal government practices (I discuss this point in detail in the upcoming chapters).

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[77] As also evinced by my interview data, about half of the displaced did not have Green Card which does not even cover for medicine while more than half of the people interviewed indicated problems with accessing health services and medicine. Moreover, as I discuss later in detail, social provision distribution as well as allocation of social assistance funds are manipulated with political motivations characterizing clientelism and prioritizing political interests over poor people.

Can We Go Back Home Now? Problems With Re-establishing Rural-Urban Linkages

During my interviews, many displaced Kurds indicated that they were very well aware that the conflict was not over and that permanent return was not possible under present security concerns. The disbelief in peace and long-term security as well as the presence of the Kurdish village guards controlling most of the rural areas left behind has hindered displaced Kurds willingness to restart lives back home. In the perception of the many displaced "the intensity of the fighting has been diminished significantly, but the 'struggle' is not over yet" as stated by a migrant. Although more than half of the interviewees stated that they would like to have access to their home villages and rural property, very few would think of staying there permanently. The younger they are, the more willing they are to stay in Diyarbakir, to find a job, to send the children to school, to buy/rent a better house and/or to go to Istanbul and even to Europe etc. Lives, expectations, opportunities and demands as well as oppressions, repressions and exclusions are rearticulated by the displaced in a space between the past (village) and the harsh circumstances of the present. Displaced Kurds try to find out new and alternative ways and spaces to reassure their physical, social, economic and also political security. One displaced woman articulates well the conflict in which she is caught between her past, present and future.

> We did not have a regularly operating school or health center in the village. There was no running water at home... But the good thing was that we did not need money in the village for many things. We were able to meet all our basic needs by ourselves. Our children did not know what hunger was, we are

> struggling with hunger here. But still I do not want to go back to the village. I want to believe that everything will be better here in Diyarbakir and our situation will improve…if there will be schools, hospitals, roads in my village, if there will be peace and dignity then I may go back (Leyla, interview, 2004)

With temporary ending of the armed conflict between the Kurdish guerilla and the Turkish security forces in 1999, the social and political situation in the region started to normalize. Certain 'no go' areas were opened to access. Many displaced Kurds started to visit their homes in the conflict zones for the first time after their displacement. There started new rural-urban connections as some of them started to rebuild their socio-economic livelihood back home. According to the official reports and statistics, a few thousand displaced people have already gone back home, though the actual size of the population permanently returned back is not recorded systematically (Aker et.al 2006).

Access to places of origin seemed to improve the socio-economic well-being of many displaced families as they are now able to combine rural and urban type survival strategies such as working in the city centers to earn cash income and working in the rural area to meet the family's food consumption. During a visit to a village within the Lice district of Diyarbakir, I met villagers who had permanently returned and ones who were in the village only seasonally (only summer time) since 2001. At the time of my visit, there was a working primary school and a health center in the village. The village was at a providential location due to its proximity to the major transportation roads to which many villages lacked access.

The village was evacuated in 1993. Between 1994 and 2001, there was still access to the village with strict security control that made it impossible for the villagers to stay and/or farm their plots. There happened no security harassment over the villagers since 2001, so some of the displaced villagers started to return permanently and some temporarily. The families staying temporarily told me that they were not financially able to rebuild their houses, which was the major reason for their inability to consider settling down in the village. During the summer time, they would stay in tents. One women, Meliha, from a seasonal family also mentioned that they had a very small plot of land that was not enough for the family's survival for the entire year. Therefore, half of the family was still in Diyarbakir (mainly the male) and the other half (mainly the children and women) was in the village working the plot for some food produce to be preserved for winter. Meliha stated

> Certain things changed with displacement, certain things did not. My husband was a truck driver working in Diyarbakir before we got uprooted in 1993. Today, he is still a truck driver. But before he owned the truck, now he doesn't have the truck anymore; we sold it after what happened [after they got displaced]. Previously, I would work in the village all the time and he would go away. Nowadays, I stay and work in the village during the summer and he still goes away to look for work (Interview with Meliha, fall 2004, anonymous village in Diyarbakir's Lice district).

Some village men that I talked to in the village's only coffee house also indicated that the soil was in a bad shape after remaining idle for years. Şeyhmus, a middle-aged permanent villager stated "considering how little they get from the land, it is way too expensive for many people to try to recuperate the land." Şeyhmus also mentioned about the direct income support to the farmers that many villagers had

been receiving from the state even during the time that they did not have access to their land.[78]

Agricultural direct income support has been one of the major income sources for many displaced families over the years despite their inability to access the land and farm the land (in about 1/3 of the interviews, interviewees informed me that they had received agricultural income support at least once since they were displaced; also see a recent report on availability of the agricultural income support to the landowners in the southeast, TESEV 2006). However, there are problems mentioned in the interviews preventing people from accessing state support for the farmers. Peasants' lack of official documentation to their land, commonness of land shared by multiple siblings and the changes in the legislation that do not consider forest area as farm land are some of the problems mentioned by the interviewees for not being able to benefit or effectively benefit from the support opportunity (The income support has

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78 After a while in the coffee house, I could not help and asked Halis, another villager sitting next to me, about the expensive-looking suit that he was wearing, "'is there a wedding coming up tonight' I said. Halis started laughing and told me that it was the way he would dress most of the time. 'We became very wealthy in the early years of 1990s. Then my father and I got arrested in the airport in Istanbul on our way to Germany' he said. 'Were you going to Germany for political asylum or what?' I asked". He gave me the answer that I was expecting the least; "'No, no! Heroin trafficking!' Halis said with a genuine naivety" that surprised me and my assistant. "He told me about the 'factory' nearby the village that they would produce heroin and traffic it from Lice to Europe during the 1990s. 'We spent several years inside [jail]. The factory got destroyed by the Turkish army after a while. Now I am clean [off any illegal business]. This suit is from those old days'" he added. (Excerpts from Fieldnotes September 14 2004, anonymous village in Lice district of Diyarbakir). Drug and human trafficking from and through Southeastern Turkey was common during the armed conflict years. As the local economy collapsed, many local people resorted to illegal economic activities that the PKK was also involved in (see for example Cagaptay,2005; also see Hasan Cemal 2003 for a journalistic account). Bozarslan (2000:22) also draws attention to "competition among military and security factions for economic resources, namely the drug trafficking and the black market, gave also birth to "privatized" forms of violence, including blood feuds and mafia kind social organizations"

been channeled through the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the World Bank). Another issue raised during the interviews is the displaced families' inability to effectively invest the agricultural income support into farm land for reasons including their lack of access to land and their tendency to spend the income for more immediate needs such as housing rent, children's education, health expenses and food consumption.

A nostalgic ideal of returning back to the village is not generally prevalent among the displaced; but still they demand access to their property left behind in order to support their urban survival. What emerged from the interviews as a pattern is the debilitating impact of larger urban structures on people's ability to be economically active as well as socially engaged in urban life. Some of the factors contributing to the displaced Kurds' inability to cope with the urban are widespread unemployment and lack of economic opportunities to exploit in Diyarbakir, as well as lack of social support nets as a consequence of distorted family relations in the aftermath of the armed conflict, displacement and loss of family members. Considering both the obstacles for return and unwillingness of the displaced to go back; integration of those groups of people into where they are, arises as a problem of poverty, unemployment, lack of public investment and infrastructure and inadequacy of social services. These common urban problems have blurred the lines among different segments of the urban population including economic and forced migrants.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the urban experiences of the displaced Kurds in relation to poverty, socio-economic deprivation, unemployment and changing social support systems. I would like to pinpoint two intertwined issues relevant to the discussion in this chapter. One is that in terms of their social, economic and political insecurity, displaced Kurds represent one of the most vulnerable social groups in Turkey in general and in the southeast in specific. Their previous experiences with poverty, marginalization, deprivation and social, economic and political oppression in their places of origin have been rearticulated, perpetuated and aggravated throughout the displacement process and aftermath of displacement.

Displaced have serious socio-economic vulnerabilities such as unemployment/underemployment, food insecurity, and lack of social security in the presence of collapsing traditional social support networks. Abuse of children by the displaced families and their increasing dependence on child labor is reported by the present research as well as many other national and international CSOs. Gettoization and spatially excluded neighborhoods emerging on the outskirts of provincial centers bring about further problems of inadequate housing, social exclusion, lack of access to social services, increasing crime rate etc. All these urban problems should be conceptualized in relation to the displacement processes and specific vulnerabilities of the displaced communities.

Nevertheless, considering the complications involved in distinguishing the displaced migrants from the economic ones during the course of the armed conflict, the question arises as how futile it might be to pick up a 'displaced category' out of a conflict-affected population when the impact of conflict extends beyond the displaced communities and even to the general Turkish society. In this respect, under conflict and emergency rule situations, it might be impossible to disentangle the economic and political reasons for migration and therefore to distinguish clearly the processes of 'voluntary' and 'involuntary' migrations.

Moreover, the distinction drawn by the international community and national civil society organizations especially the human rights groups, between the displaced Kurds (perceived as the victim-currently constitute the urban poor) and the Kurdish village guards (perceived as the armed perpetrator cooperating with the Turkish army-remained still back in rural areas) is quite problematic. This external distinction has the potential to further deepen the existing enmity between the displaced Kurds and the ones who remained as village guards. The displaced became visible in the urban centers; whereas the village guards who were destined to rural poverty, insecurity and military oppression remained invisible back in the village and condemned for abusing their armed power against the civilians and for taking over the property left behind by the displaced Kurds.

Processes of poverty, socio-political exclusion and oppression are likely to have closely overlapped for urban and rural Kurdish groups, and also for different

segments of urban poor that the displaced Kurds have been mingled together. At this point we need to keep in mind that the displaced population is much more 'popular' than other conflict-affected groups in the international rights and refugee regimes, not because they suffered more than the others but because they are 'uprooted'. They are therefore perceived as more unstable, more precarious and much more difficult to manage/govern within the discourses of 'development', 'governance' and also 'international security'

CHAPTER-4

VICTIMS, CITIZENS or PARTIZANS?

DISPLACEMENT and POLITICIZATION OF ETHNICITY

'Displaced persons' may *not* represent the entire displaced population. Rather, I look at a particular segment of forced migrants; the ones who could not manage to integrate themselves into the economic, social and political relations in urban centers, the ones who have been excluded by those urban dynamics, the ones who share the social and economic insecurities of millions at the periphery of urban structures. There is substantial heterogeneity within the conflict-induced migrant population that escapes the interest of academic and policy research. Those are the people who have made themselves invisible in urban centers by becoming a part of it without falling into spatial and social locations with migrant concentration. Those people who have managed to make it in the cities also in several cases were reluctant to define themselves as 'displaced' or 'forced migrant' despite sharing a similar experience of being uprooted with the others. Those are also the people with the most favorable opinions about the Turkish state and most opposed views towards radical Kurdish mobilization. It is important to keep in mind that displacement is a process shaped through social, economic and political experiences. People do not get displaced at a simple single moment in time; rather they become displaced in time through their experiences with socio-economically and politically oppressive and exclusionary processes.

In this chapter, I continue my discussion of the socio-economic vulnerabilities and insecurities of the displaced Kurds. I examine local experiences with political violence and displacement in terms of the dissemination of pro-Kurdish politicization among the grassroots. This chapter is important for showing that displacement is not only about

physical relocation of masses, their ending up in urban poverty, social exclusion and unemployment. Political violence (i.e. displacement) also has effects on people's political orientation and identities. I discuss in this chapter that recent Kurdish contention in southeastern Turkey is not necessarily about poverty, unemployment and socio-economic problems of the city life that masses of displaced Kurds have recently found themselves overwhelmed with (I have discussed socio-economic processes including urban poverty and unemployment in the previous chapter). Rather, I show in this chapter that the new Kurdish contention in southeastern Turkey is about conflict-affected migrants developing identities, interests and relations with the pro-Kurdish politics and claims accordingly. In line with that, I examine how local people construct discursive discourses about what happened to them and why; and what should be claimed and/or demanded in order to secure lives in politically and economically precarious conflict situation.

Drawing upon interviews with conflict-induced migrants and ethnographic research done in southeastern province of Diyarbakır, I have identified two major intertwined political and social processes that inscribe the everyday life politics at the local level. First, political violence facilitate dissemination of politicization as well as radicalization against the state among Kurdish grassroots. The Turkish state has lost a significant amount of its legitimacy in the eyes of the conflict-affected migrant Kurds due to pervasive military violence involved during the displacement process. Displaced Kurds at the juncture of several forms of political violence (re)constructed their perception of *justice* in relation to how they perceived the actions of the state, and also how they perceived the actions of state-friendly Kurdish communities. Throughout their experiences with political violence and displacement carried on by the Turkish security forces as well as pro-state Kurds, displaced Kurds have developed a *political agency*

seeking to settle accounts with the perpetrators and *to demand rights and make claims in ethnic terms*.

Second, throughout displacement and within the urban context aftermath, pro-Kurdish ethno-nationalist and ethno-political sentiments have gotten entrenched among the grassroots interplaying with the national, regional and transnational dynamics and been transformed into new forms of protest activities and mobilization. Rural-urban population relocation has created new forms of affiliation between the grassroots and the organized Kurdish politics and civil society in city centers in southeastern Turkey which have been recently translated into urban movements and protest activities. I elaborate further on this second point in chapter 6.

FIGURE-TWO

Conflict-Affected Local Population in Southeastern Turkey

Urban	*Rural*
Displaced in city centers	Village guards (predominately Kurdish too)
Economic migrants (of the conflict-era) in city	Displaced Kurds in towns and rural

These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, meaning for example some displaced Kurds were previously village guards, many village guards are a part of the impoverish rural population while there may be a very discursive line between some of the displaced Kurds and economic migrants due to the impossibility to disentangle the economic and political causes of displacement from each other.

Displacement refers to processes that politicize the displaced in such that requires them to make judgments, take sides, develop survival strategies to act upon and to adapt to new circumstances. Abandonment of land and property, and appropriation of evacuated land and property by the Kurds who did not get displaced have contributed to changing the traditional social and power structures in the region. Displaced Kurds have in turn developed an *ethnicized rhetoric* of displacement antagonistically engaged with the Turkish state as well as pro-state Kurdish communities. Pro-Kurdish local government actors have been catalysts in perpetuating an *ethnicized* discourse of violence and the war as well as of poverty. I explain that together with the pro-Kurdish political party's (HADEP/DEHAP/DTP) taking over municipal governments in 1999 and again in 2004 in several strategic southeastern provinces after the nation-wide democratic local government elections, grassroots politicization among migrant Kurds has found new channels of expression and articulated in new forms of urban patronage relations between the pro-Kurdish political party and the conflict-affected Kurdish masses.

Before and after displacement, displaced communities were exposed to a new understanding of justice defined first in terms of their rights- '*our rights*'- with ethnic connotations, construed to be granted inherently as a consequence of one's being a Kurd. This first strand of rights is articulated in ethnic, cultural and linguistic terms and incorporate claims for 'independence' and 'self-determination' (ambiguous in such that do not answer the question 'what should be the nature of 'independence' and 'self-determination'?' and ''independence' and 'self-determination' for whom?'… 'the

Kurds!'… 'which Kurds? who are the Kurds?'[79]). This first strand of rights was first instigated by the PKK, later on adopted by the pro-Kurdish, pro-PKK civil society and finally integrated into various other domestic and international civil and political agendas to accommodate and/or co-opt the Kurdish demands. Secondly, justice is requested by the displaced Kurds in terms of their rights- '*our rights*'- violated during the course of the armed conflict. This later group of rights specifically refers to the state violence including displacement, destruction of property, extra-judicial killings, disappearances, detention, torture etc[80].

In what follows, I examine in detail the social and political repercussions of population displacement in order to answer the following questions; how do displaced Kurds perceive their experiences with violence, armed conflict and displacement in relation to the state? How do they construct their experiences in relation to the PKK-led pro-Kurdish mobilization and pro-Kurdish demands?

DISPLACEMENT AS A POLITICAL EXPERIENCE

Displacement as *a form of violence* transforms social relations, power structures and even economic production systems, and alters the use of land and resources in conflict areas as groups of people get redistributed mainly from rural to urban[81] as well as urban to urban. Throughout the processes of conflict and displacement, people lose their "neutrality," becoming involved in conflict through their experiences (with violence and uprootedness). Here the word "neutral" is used in terms of immunity to, as well as

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[79] Ironically, pro-state Kurds and/or Kurds outside of the circles of the pro-Kurdish politics are excluded from this exclusive construction of Kurdishness that was discursively stated by displaced migrants and systematically constructed by the organized pro-Kurdish actors in their hegemonic discourses of identity.
[80] Both rights claims in ethnic terms and also rights claims to settle accounts with the state for political violence are supported by the increasing salience of the international human rights regime in 1990s.
[81] This is particularly true for guerilla war cases since the conflict localities tend to be rural areas.

isolation from, the conflict. As people are physically located within the conflict geography (as civilians or armed paramilitaries) even if they are not necessarily sympathetic with one side or the other in the conflict, they are no longer immune to or isolated from the conflict. In most cases, they are obliged and expected to take sides by the power actors who aim to identify the enemies and the friends. Conflict turns into a socio-political experience for civilians as they try to find their way out or maneuver to survive in the conflict zones. Previous systems and structures of power and justice change considerably as earlier forms of traditional social relations and power structures are broken down by the dynamics of conflict and displacement; however, power relations are redefined as new forms of marginalization, exclusion and subjugation emerge at home and in the destination areas (see also Escobar, 2000 and Sanchez G., 2000 for international case studies).

Bozarslan (2000) notes that there were two main state strategies used to manage the PKK guerilla mobilization in the southeast; *resource allocation* and *coercion*. In resource allocation tactic, the state offered economic and power assets to the local communities in exchange for their support in fighting against the PKK. This is how the village guard system was created. The state started to arm the pro-state Kurdish tribes and co-opted them politically. In coercion tactic, the resistant elements in the region were eliminated including the resistant population through destruction of the country side and population displacement. The Kurdish population who were not willing to join the village guards was forced to leave their homes.

Changing power relations in southeastern Turkey during the course of the conflict have been a product of the dynamics of these two conflict strategies. By allocating resources to pro-state Kurdish communities for example, the state has reproduced

traditional tribal struggles and enmities among the Kurds. By providing arms to the village guards, tribal struggles have been also militarized and enmities have gotten deeper as village guards used their armed force against unarmed Kurdish communities to seize property and reinforce their tribal power in the region. By using coercion in the form of destruction and village evacuations, the state was able to clear the resistant geographies and control them. There is however one missing power actor in this picture, the PKK.

Indeed, PKK also used similar strategies to 'honor' and 'venerate' the supporters promising ranks, prestige, status and material rewards; and 'punish' the 'traitors' violently[82]. PKK employed guerilla strategies to extract support from the local communities and manipulated the traditional tribal enmities among the Turkish Kurds to secure spaces of maneuver in the region. Though the Turkish security forces and Kurdish village guards were primarily responsible for forced migrations during the course of the armed conflict, the PKK was indirectly involved in the process of displacement in almost entire cases in my interview data. Local people turned into pawns in between the PKK and the Turkish security forces as they try to avoid both and/or were forced to align with one side. PKK continuously threatened the local people against collaborating with the Turkish security forces and systematically deployed the villages for guerilla recruitment and logistic support despite local resistance and/or anxiety. Even the interviewees most sympathetic to the illegal organization were very articulate about the contentious dynamics of the displacement process. One forced migrant who was previously a PKK militia in his village admitted the following:

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[82] Interview notes (Diyarbakır/Turkey Fall 2004)

> …the youngsters in the village had sympathy for the organization [PKK], older people including our parents were very concerned about the situation. In many occasions they begged us and asked us to stop working for the guerilla or to leave the village… they were scared to live with militia since villages with militia were being attacked by the Turkish soldiers one by one. We could not leave, we were everything for the organization, we were potential guerilla, we would provide strategic information regarding the movements of the Turkish security forces, we would give them [PKK guerilla] food, bed everything…at the end, the village was attacked by the Turkish soldiers and destroyed to get us out. Until that moment, we had to stay as long as we could." (Interview with Hüseyin, Diyarbakır, 2004)

Mahsun, another forced migrant, states;

> There was [Turkish] security pressure upon us. But in some way, we gave the decision to come here [Diyarbakır]…. Turkish soldiers were very suspicious of our village because youngsters started to go to the mountains to join the guerilla. My older brother joined them too. Then my other older brother and my younger sister decided to join. My parents and I stopped them hardly. My father decided to leave home to save my siblings from the guerilla (Interview with Mahsun, Diyarbakır, 2004).

Çetin's story--a young migrant from the province of Hakkari bordering Iraq and Iran--reveals some of the other complexities involved in displacement process as well as in local people's maneuvers to secure themselves in between the PKK and the Turkish army.

> There was no PKK pressure upon us until we decided to become village guards in 1988. Despite that a few young people joined the guerilla; there was no common support for the PKK in the village. It seemed like a good idea for us to side with the Turkish army and get armed. We became guards and then every single day, at least one villager got killed by the PKK. Entire village decided to leave in 1995; the state said 'no, stay and the army will protect you'. We said 'no, we are leaving'. We decided to come to Van. Somehow, our story attracted [Turkish] media attention, you know we were the victims of the PKK in their eyes, it was something that the Turkish media wanted to see and publicize. In fact, we were the victims of both sides… But the publicity helped us; we were given housing in Van. The state and the Van governor provided everything, we provided the labor. We built up a neighborhood for ourselves here in Yalimerez [the name of the neighborhood in the province of Van] (Interview with Çetin, migrant from Hakkari a province bordering Iraq and Iran, interview conducted in Van, summer 2004, Çetin was then a member of the pro-Kurdish DEHAP).

It is however noteworthy that majority of the interviewees refused to agree on that the PKK was one way or another responsible for uprootedness. Many hold the Turkish state and village guards responsible for their being displaced, though in almost all accounts, interviewees stated their fear of the PKK in case they would do something that the organization did not approve of and also various forms of PKK pressure on the village to convince the villagers to provide the guerilla with logistic support. Interestingly, PKK pressure and even violence were reported as 'moral' and legitimate while the village guard and the state violence was 'immoral' and 'despicable'[83].

Dynamics of developing separate perceptions of two violent armed power actors are complicated. But for many displaced Kurds, PKK violence was legitimate and moral, because it was basically more understandable; it targeted the 'betrayers' of 'the Kurdish cause'. The state violence on the hand was more incomprehensible because it was more pervasive and disoriented. Many displaced Kurds lost their affiliation to the Turkish state at the moment that they were caught by the state violence, a kind of affiliation that they never imagined until they lost it. It is at this point that many displaced Kurds started questioning their belonging to the Turkish state and nation. Sait, a forced migrant, representing many displaced migrants with no previous affiliation or sympathy for the PKK states

> The time that the Turkish army came to attack the village, I talked to a high-ranked soldier. I tried to explain to him that we had nothing to do with the PKK and we did not know what the organization was about. He yelled at me and told me to go to the 36th parallel (Northern Iraq). He said that was where we deserved to be. By then I did not even know what 36th parallel was. I contemplated a lot about what he meant that day. Later on, I came to the realization that he was telling me that we [Kurds] did not have any place here in Turkish territory and

[83] Interviews with the forced migrants

> should be dumped into Northern Iraq with our fellows over there. It was quite offensive for me… Now I know what to be a Kurd is and what the PKK has been fighting for (Interview with Sait, Van, 2004)

Another forced migrant makes a similar statement in questioning his stance in relation to the Turkish state and Turkish army;

> When the organization [the PKK] first emerged, we were scared of it. We would call them *Apocular* [men of Abdulah Ocalan]. We tried to stay away from them and not to mess with them… There was no support for the PKK in our village at the beginning. But we did not want to side with the state either. Why did I have to fight for the Turkish state? It was the Turkish army that should have protected us, the citizens against any danger. Some people in the village joined the village guards. Some refused to become village guards. Some have started sympathizing with the organization [the PKK]. Let alone the ones who refused to be village guards, the state got even suspicious of the village guards [in our village]. The arms were taken back by the state after a while. The state has never trusted us and in turn we have never had trust in the state nor had we in the [Turkish] army (Interview with Cevahir, Diyarbakır, winter 2004).

The politicization process of the conflict-affected population is in this regard associated with Kurdish citizens questioning the concept of citizenship and/or their affiliation with the Turkish state as citizens.

> They [Turkish soldiers] asked us either to become village guards [armed Kurdish counter-insurgency groups] or to leave the village. I served my military duty years ago as a citizen of this country. When they asked me to join the village guards to fight the PKK, wasn't I a citizen of this country then? I was a regular citizen of this country; I was just a peasant by then. Was it me who should have protected the state or was it the state that should have protected its own citizens against the terrorists?... Who was going to guarantee the security of my children [in the village against the PKK]?... I refused to become a village guard; many [villagers] did the same thing.
>
> The state is a state only for the village guards, not for us. We did not want to get involved in the fighting. If the Turkish army was unable to fight the PKK, how did it expect a handful of peasants to fight against the armed guerilla?
>
> (Interviews, Diyarbakır, summer/fall 2004)

Meliha's statement is interesting in such that it illustrates that the Turkish army was perplexed in its ability to distinguish between the citizens who did not have anything

to do with the PKK and the ones who allegedly supported the organization, as well as in terms of how to treat those different Kurdish communities. Meliha stated

> Our hamlet was burnt down by Turkish soldiers *inadvertently*, a Turkish general told us during the evacuation. He even *apologized* from us. He knew that there was no support for the PKK in our hamlet, but the soldiers had already burnt down the houses together with those of the other hamlets in the village before he arrived. Then they [Turkish soldiers] tried to save some of our belongings [from the houses] after an order from the general, but it was too late. A lot of villages were burnt down like that. (Emphasis added by myself, Interview with Meliha, fall 2004, anonymous village in Diyarbakır's Lice district)

The central state together with the state appointed local governors have provided limited provisions to certain segments of the displaced including the displaced who previously worked as village guards and the displaced who agreed to officially 'acknowledge' that displacement happened due to 'PKK terror' by signing a petition[84]. These Kurdish communities released the Turkish state and the security forces from any legal and political responsibility for the forced nature of displacements. Moreover, they acted like 'model citizens'/'loyal citizens' who accepted Turkish state actions legitimate[85].

However, a considerable portion of displaced Kurds in the cities, as revealed by my interviews and also supported by several NGO reports, refused to play the game according to the terms of the Turkish state. Many refused the conditional state aid; which means that those displaced Kurds did not only refuse to free the Turkish state and village guards from responsibility for village evacuation, but they also refused to put the blame

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[84] This procedure of getting the displaced to sign a contract to be eligible for the state aid was exercised by the local governors in each eastern and southeastern province under the state of emergency.

[85] In Diyarbakır '500 evler/500 houses' neighborhood established on the outskirts of the city center is an example for the residences allocated for the displaced Kurds who collaborated with the Turkish state on the terms.

on the PKK. One representative from a pro-Kurdish migrants' association noted the already entrenched sympathy for the PKK among the displaced Kurdish population with the following words,

> These people [displaced Kurdish communities] organize demonstrations for the release of Öcalan [the leader of the PKK], they hold his posters on the streets. And the state asks them to agree that it was the PKK terror that displaced them and made them suffer. (Key Informant interview with Şefika Gürbüz, the Director of Göç-Der- Migrants' Association, May 2004]).

Considering that thousands of displaced also signed the petition and received the state aid and some have already returned back home; the ones that stayed back in the cities may be representing the most contentious Kurdish communities antagonistic with the state and/or with the village guards back in the rural areas. Until very recently, this refusal to sign the state aid petition was a passive/silent resistance among displaced communities.[86] I perceive this passive resistance as a 'political act' on the side of the displaced, a kind of assertiveness not to collaborate with the Turkish state before and after displacement, a way of stating an indirect political claim regarding their stance in the conflict.

> They asked us to sign that paper stating that our village was destroyed due to terror… We knew what they were trying to do using that paper. We told them that the village was destroyed by the [Turkish] soldiers. They said no!, it was due to terror… We refused to sign.
>
> I went to the state governor's office to ask for compensation and help for return to our village. They told me to sign a paper to get state aid. I asked them to read the paper for me. One person read it. I refused to sign and they asked me to leave.

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[86] Recently, local Kurdish organizing and local civil society initiatives have started enjoying the support of the international community (i.e. EU and international NGOs) as well as the 'democratization reforms' in Turkish law as a part of EU accession process. So displacement issue has gain a voice in domestic and international arena that makes the displaced people more confident about their right to seek compensation and justice.

> Some villagers from our village were given apartments in '500 Evler'.[87] They agreed to sign the contract. I did not. (Interviews, Diyarbakır summer-fall, 2004

Being active in claim-making for justice can be construed as an engagement with the state to settle accounts of the past. But it is not always about being active, but rather adopting a particular stance (sometimes in a passive manner) against the state that in turn reflects these people being political.

Armed conflict and political violence have crystallized the traditional alienation between the local Kurdish communities and the central state. However, newly emerging dynamics specific to 1980s and 1990s complicated the relationship between the local population and the Turkish state beyond traditional contention in the region. Particularly, the PKK factor in the region has had effects on local people's developing new understandings of their position vis a vis the Turkish state and general Turkish society. As people have developed ideological and familial relations with the ethno-nationalist organization, state-citizen antagonism has sharpened and gained an accentuated ethno-nationalist tone reflecting the PKK discourse. Indeed, PKK has successfully capitalized on local people's social, economic and political vulnerabilities using ethno-nationalist sentiments. Ethno-nationalist sentiments have been reinforced by a quest for justice among the local population socio-economically marginalized before displacement and further victimized during the course of the armed conflict.

On the one hand, PKK-led ethnic politicization on the ground quickly disseminated among the grassroots in 1990s with the appeal of the organization to the socio-economically marginalized, politically alienated peasants communities. Many

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[87] 500 Evler (500 Houses)- the name of a neighborhood constructed with the initiatives of the Diyarbakır local government for the migrant families, mainly targeting the displaced families.

displaced Kurds (about a quarter of my interviewees) also found their family members among the PKK militia and guerilla before and after displacement. On the other hand, the state violence in the region reached unprecedented levels against dissident civilians as well as the ones caught in the middle of the violent armed groups including the army, the PKK and the Kurdish Hezbullah. Displaced Kurdish citizens experienced a multitude of several forms of violence during the course of displacement such as extrajudicial murders, disappearances and torture. State antagonism towards 'suspicious' Kurds has translated into increasing salience of ethno-nationalist and radical tendencies among the grassroots. Legitimacy of the state and pro-Kurdish actors including citizen masses in the eyes of each other has concomitantly declined.

> ...We were ignorant peasants by then. We were enlightened by the organization [the PKK] and learnt about our rights. (Interview, Diyarbakır, summer-fall 2004)

> …do you know who the PKK is? We are the PKK, and our children in the mountains and in the prisons.[88]

It has been through these dialectical processes of questioning the legitimacy of the Turkish state (the perpetrator of the violence in the eyes of the Kurds) and of becoming a part of the PKK and pro-Kurdish politics through personal or family affiliations that displaced Kurds have developed discursive relations between the violence they experience and their being target due to their being Kurds, 'illegitimate' children of the Turkish Republic.

PRO-KURDISH ACTORS NEGOTIATING ABOUT DISPLACEMENT

The southeastern province of Diyarbakır close to the Turkish-Iraqi border, provides a vivid example of a 'political geography' through the geo-strategic location of

the province (its distance from the Turkish west and the political capital, Ankara, but its centrality in southeastern Turkey and its closeness to strategic border areas) and because of the political identity of the province (in terms of its symbolic status as capital of Kurdish culture and center of 'Kurdish struggle'). I selectively draw upon the interviews conducted during my short-term visit to another southeastern province Van. Diyarbakır represents a peculiar case due to its political importance and the ethnic, political and geo-strategic connotations attached to this province.[89] Population wise, Diyarbakır is predominately Kurdish though perception of Kurdish identity varies considerably among the local people[90]. The support for the pro-Kurdish political parties has been strong and persistent in Diyarbakır throughout years since 1990s. In the context of low intensity war and under the political suppression put by the emergency rule, civil organizing has been highly politicized and strongly engaged with the issues associated with the armed conflict and the state of emergency, such as human rights violations.

Despite political surveillance and repression over the province, civil society organizations (CSOs) and civil initiatives have been well-developed relative to other

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[88] An answer given upon my naive inquiry of their affiliation with the PKK to understand the dynamics of displacement.

[89] Diyarbakır, not only among Kurds in Turkey, but also among politicized Kurds in general, is considered as the center of Kurdish political 'struggle'. The province has also gained unofficial recognition from the international community, European states and EU during their attempts to identify a focal point among politicized Kurds to negotiate Kurdish demands.

[90] Perception of ethnicity in cultural terms and political terms is complicated as pointed out several studies on Kurdish Question in Turkey (see for example Kirisci and Winrow 1997). It was also evinced during my encounters with the local people having different political orientations that definition of ethnicity and people's affiliation with 'Kurdishness' and 'Turkishness' is multi-dimensional. While some Kurds prefer to define themselves first as Turks (and/or Turkish citizens) and second as Kurds; some tend to associate with 'Kurdishness' more strongly; some prefer to disassociate themselves from 'Turkishness' as it is the case with many displaced Kurds; some prefer to cling to their 'Turkishness'. In one occasion, two Zaza Kurds (Zaza refers to an ethnically different Kurdish community in Turkey speaking a completely different language than standard Kurdish (Kurmangi)) got into argument in front of me as one argued that Zazas were Kurdish and the other argued that they were not; as one affiliated himself with pro-Kurdish politics, the other stated that he would be much more tended to be counted as a Turk than a Kurd.

provinces in the region and even other Anatolian regions in Turkey. Pro-Kurdish civil organizing has been particularly assertive especially after the arrest of the PKK leader in 1999 and the lifting of the emergency state rule (OHAL)[91] in 2002. The ethnic homogeneity of Diyarbakır as well as the scrupulously balanced tension between the politicized Kurds, the local government units and the security forces provides not only political spaces, but also 'physical' spaces for the organized Kurds to exploit since the lifting of the emergency rule in the region. Street demonstrations, urban signature campaigns and the pro-Kurdish civil society discourses (their local discourses vs. national discourses) tend to be more visible and radical in their ideologies and demands in southeastern Turkey than they are in other parts of Turkey.

Parallel to the emergence of pro-Kurdish actors in the national arena; civil and political pro-Kurdish local actors have taken their positions in provincial centers in the southeast by the end of 1990s. Displacement of Kurds, destruction of Kurdish villages by the Turkish security forces and human rights violations committed by the elements of the state have turned into a leverage for local, national and Diaspora pro-Kurdish groups to speak to the state and the international community in the name of the 'Kurdish victims'. As one metropolitan sub-district mayor states

> What happened in 1990s was a different phenomenon[92]. People were expelled from their homes in masses across the region. They were driven away systematically by the Turkish army as a part of a politics of dehumanization of the Kurdish homelands[93]. Authoritarian nature of the Turkish state, starting from the

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[91] OHAL, continuing martial law in the region, was initially introduced in eight provinces in eastern and southeastern Turkey on July 1987; including Bingöl, Diyarbakır, Elaziğ, Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt, Tunceli and Van. Batman and Şırnak were included under the state of emergency after they were turned into separate provinces in 1990.

[92] She is distinguishing between displacement during 1980s and 1990s.

[93] The mayor's comment here contradicts with my migrant interviewee's account taken in Van where he says that the Turkish state tried to encourage them to stay in their village in Hakkari. In fact, the state discourses have been always welcoming towards Kurdish citizens, however as long as they keep their

> early days of the republic, has wanted to crush the Kurdish identity, annihilate the Kurdish struggle…Now they [the government] came up with a new law, 'Compensation of Damage Arising from Terror and the Struggle against Terror', which weakens the conflict-affected Kurds even further, degrades their honor. The state calls village destruction 'the struggle against terror,' not even one single honorable person can accept this! The only terror this people are familiar with is the state terror" (Interview with Yurdusev Özsökmenler, the Mayor of Bağlar (subdistrict within the Diyarbakır Metropolitan center) affiliated with the pro-Kurdish party DEHAP[94], Diyarbakır, summer 2004)

She, the mayor, made a distinction between the 1980s and 1990s. In the late 1980s, conflict-affected people escaped the conflict on a more individual or family basis after it started in 1984. Starting from 1989, the intensity of the armed fighting increased substantially and conflict spilled over civilian population as local support for the PKK increased together with the local contention against the Turkish army, upon which Turkish security forces started to undertook extensive village evacuation operations to cut off the ties between the guerilla and 'suspicious' peasant communities.[95] Organized Kurdish groups tend to emphasize village evacuations in order to highlight the direct involvement of the Turkish security forces in the process of displacement. This predisposition also contributes to the construction of a nostalgic notion of 'Kurdish homeland' destroyed by oppressive nation-states in the Middle East.

The mayor's statement also contradicts with my migrant interviewee's account taken in Van where the interviewee said that the Turkish state tried to encourage them to

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ethnic identity private and agree to be a peaceful constitute of the general Turkish society and Turkish territory (see for example Yeğen, 2000). Also see Butenschon 2000.

[94] Democratic People's Party (DEHAP-Demokratik Halk Partisi), recently transformed into Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi-DTP)

[95] Although this distinction is important, my definition of displacement in this study is not limited to village evacuations by the Turkish security forces. There is a great complexity associated with the causes of displacement as presented in Table 2, chapter 3.

stay in their village in Hakkari[96]. Indeed, there is no solid ground in arguing that village evacuations were undertaken by the Turkish security forces in order to destroy the 'Kurdish homeland'. Rather, displacement was selective in such that certain geographies and certain groups of Kurds were insulated from and immune to the state violence. Displacement happened in localities where there was support for the PKK[97] and especially village guards and their families have been encouraged by the state to remain put for surveillance of the topography as well as to consolidate the state power in the region. Displacement was rather a war tactic to distinguish between who was on the side of whom and who constituted a potential threat.

The same tactic was also used by the PKK against the village guard communities. However, in contrast to a guerilla organization, the state was expected to protect its citizens and deal with the terrorist threat within the domain of rule of law in order to maintain its legitimacy in the eye of the civilians. 'Suspicious' Kurdish communities were not only displaced by the security forces against their will. They were also left without any form of state assistance to resettle and restart lives in secure places. From a human rights point of view, as advocated by the international organizations such as HRW and AI, the major problem is the Turkish army's inability and lack of prudence to distinguish the civilian population from the armed PKK guerilla and/or the state's failure to protect its civilian population squeezed in between different fighting fractions including the Turkish army, the PKK and the Hezbullah (HRW 2004, 2005, 2006; AI

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[96] Interview with Cetin 2004 Van Turkey

[97] In fact, the state discourses have been always welcoming towards Kurdish citizens, however as long as they keep their ethnic identity private and agree to be a peaceful constitute of the general Turkish society and Turkish territory (see for example Yegen, 2000). Also see Butenschon 2000.

2004, 2005). The director of Göç-Der, national pro-Kurdish migrants' association, points this out ;

> Lets say it was not the Turkish security forces but the PKK guerilla that displaced these people, in fact according to our national survey[98] with various displaced communities in certain metropolitan centers, we found out that there are Kurds displaced by the PKK guerilla, very tiny percentage like 1-2% of the entire sample. Even if everybody was displaced by the PKK, it would not change our perspective. It would still be the Turkish state and army failing to protect civilians. It would still be the state's responsibility to take care of these people and help them to safely go back home and compensate for their losses (Interview with Şefika Gürbüz, İstanbul, May 2004).

She further notes in a pro-PKK civil society assembly[99] in Diyarbakır after our meeting in Istanbul,

> We have not been able to resolve the migration issue. However, we have managed to get it into the national and international agenda…There has been produced no solution for it by the state… There have always been put obstacles [by the state] in front of people's access to the European Court for Human Rights. The new law 'Compensation of Damage Arising from Terror and the Struggle against Terror' does not allow people with family members previously affiliation with the PKK to make applications for their property destroyed by the Turkish army. This is not only against the Turkish constitution, but is also not in compliance with the Geneva Convention (Şefika Gürbüz, Official Director of Göç-Der, Fieldnotes, 16/10/2004, Civil Society Assembly organized by Göç-Der, Kurdish Institute, Diyarbakır)

Forced migrations have not only further contributed to politicization of the displaced Kurdish masses, but also brought those masses into urban centers where they have gained visibility and the ability to be political. Along with encounters with state agents after displacement, there happened encounters with organized pro-Kurdish groups, such as the pro-Kurdish CSOs operating throughout Turkey including migrants'

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[98] I was given a copy of the report with survey results but denied access to the raw data. Although the survey suffers many methodological problems, the report came out of the survey is one of the few extensive sources available on the issue. The survey results and their accuracy should also be treated carefully due to the affiliation between the Goc-Der and the PKK

[99] The assembly that I was also invited started with praising the imprisoned leader of the PKK and the PKK guerilla and militia.

associations, human rights organizations and local bar associations whose lawyers have also been affiliated with various CSOs.

Hundreds of Kurdish villagers have carried their collective cases to the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) since the early 1990s[100]. Human rights organizations and the local bar associations have put a significant effort into getting the evacuated villages organized to make claims in national courts and at the ECHR. The chain reaction of this organizing was that many villagers come together with their fellow villagers to get help from the bar associations to carry their cases to the ECHR. In an interview with Cihan Aydin of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, he stated that in case the Turkish government fails to open effective domestic judiciary channels for the displacement-related human rights violation, there were approximately 6000 potential cases in their hand ready to be submitted to the Court. He added that the massive amount of cases lined up at the ECtHR and the potential cases waiting to be initiated was the major reason for the Turkish government to enact the Compensation Law (Compensation of Damage Arising from Terror and the Struggle against Terror) in 2004[101].

Organized pro-Kurdish groups in Diaspora also collaborated with the organized local civilian groups in the southeast to bring the Kurdish demands to the attention of the international civil society, including demands with regard to the Turkish army-induced

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[100] It is not easy to quantify the number of cases opened by the displaced Kurds at the ECHR since there is no distinct category for 'displacement' and human rights violations during the village evacuations have been treated under the category of 'human rights violations due to activities of the security forces'. See for example Kurban, 2006. However, it is estimated that there are approximately 1500 collective cases currently suspended in the Court. In my interview with Cihan Aydin of the Diyarbakır Bar Association, he stated that there were approximately 6000 potential cases in their hand ready to be submitted to the Court in case Turkey fails to take necessary legislative steps to compensate property damage as well as other human rights violations during village evacuations (Interview with Cihan Aydin Diyarbakır 2004).

[101] Interview with Cihan Aydin, Lawyer, Director of the EU-sponsored '*Herkes Icin Adalet Projesi*/Justice of Everybody Project', Diyarbakır summer 2004.

village evacuations (Yildiz 2005). The signature campaign initiated in 2005 by the transnational Kurdish elite groups together with the local organized middle-class urban groups in Diyarbakır under the title of "I am a Kurd, I am a presence, I demand," is an interesting example in this respect. The strongest support for this campaign comes from the Kurds in Europe and local urban middle-class groups in Diyarbakır (BİA, 2005). Stands were set up in Diyarbakır and signatures were collected under a list of Kurdish demands to be submitted to the Turkish Parliament and EU units (Hürriyet, July 17, 2005). The political demands ranged from the creation of a federal system in southeastern Turkey to the acceptance of the Kurdish language as the second official language together with Turkish. Further demands on the reconstruction of the Kurdish villages destroyed during the armed conflict, and the 'creation of a socio-economic and political environment that would enable the forced migrants to return to their original places of residence in dignity' were also included in the petition.

LOCAL POLITICS IN FACE OF DEMISE OF THE WELFARE STATE

Municipal Government for Politics

As the capability of the state to be a guarantor of social rights has declined as part of economic transformation, urbanization and neo-liberal entrenchment, citizens have become even more dependent on welfare provision because of extreme economic insecurity. The recently changing role of local governments has however, emerged as a factor counterbalancing the decline of central social state. As noted by Bugra and Keyder (2006: 224) "while central government funds to the poor have declined, these types of assistance have significantly increased at the municipal level" since mid-1990s. Under the general socio-economic insecurity in the country, municipal governments have reinforced their significance in domestic politics as well as in the everyday lives of

citizens all around Turkey. Political parties that are highly organized at the very local level have taken over the municipal governments in the most recent local elections; pro-Islamists across Turkey including many eastern and southeastern provinces and Kurdish ethno-nationalists in strategic southeastern provinces such as Diyarbakır, Şirnak and Hakkari (see Maps 4, 5 and 6 in chapter 2).

In my interviews with the local government representatives and sub-district mayors in Diyarbakır, the centre of pro-Kurdish politics in Turkey, the migrant informants highlighted the strategic leverage and 'legitimate' status of the pro-Kurdish political party in domestic politics, a peculiar leverage and status gained through support from the citizens in democratic elections. Through their takeover of the metropolitan local government in Diyarbakır and several provincial and district municipalities in southeastern Turkey, the pro-Kurdish party has adopted the role of the representative focal point of Kurds in Turkey and of their demands despite the party not succeeding in surpassing the 10 percent threshold to send representative to Parliament. The party also did not manage to win over the pro-Islamists in many eastern and southeastern provinces. The pro-Kurdish DEHAP; however, has consolidated its power in five southeastern provinces in the 2004 local government elections including Diyarbakır[102].

The pro-Kurdish party has been well organized in Diyarbakır at the neighborhood level especially after the arrest of the PKK leader in 1998. On the one hand, declining power of the guerilla resistance of the PKK demoralized the pro-Kurdish mobilization; on the other hand, civil organization gained more importance for the movement. The subsequent lifting of the emergency rule in southeastern provinces has opened politically

suitable spaces for the pro-Kurdish political party to better organize at the local level. During my visits to the district branches of the DEHAP in 2004-- this was just following the 2004 local elections -- there was a restructuring of neighborhood commissions going on, aiming to reach 'each and every single family' in the neighborhoods. There was also a conscientious interest among the municipality representatives and workers in local people's everyday problems. A neighborhood commission representative affiliated with the pro-Kurdish municipality stated

> People fight to survive. Nobody can be helpful to the other… Considering this, we want to help them through the municipality and the associations.

The mayor of the Bağlar sub-district with the largest displaced migrant population in Diyarbakır provincial center prioritized the major areas of concern about which the Diyarbakır municipal government was most sensitive;

> Health issues and environmental hygiene, women's problems and street children are our major concerns… The main problem in Diyarbakır is actually joblessness, but it is something that we, as the municipality, cannot do a lot about.

When I asked her about the main difference between the DEHAP municipality (working since 1999 local elections) and the previous municipal government in Diyarbakır, she subtly indicated the political aloofness of the previous local government from 'the realities of the Kurdish question and war' in the region.

> We know what has happened to these people, we know what kind of violence and oppression they have experienced so far, because we have experienced everything with them along the way. We know that there is at least one person in each family, who is either in the prison, or at the mountains [among the guerilla] or in the grave due to the war. This is our difference. We acknowledge these realities and act accordingly with sensitivities. (Interview with Yurdusev Özsökmenler, Sub-district Mayor from the pro-Kurdish DEHAP, June 20 2004, Bağlar/Diyarbakır)

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[102] The other provinces that the DEHAP won the provincial municipalities through its coalition with the SHP are Tunceli, Batman, Sirnak and Hakkari.

During my six months stay in the province, the pro-Kurdish Diyarbakır metropolitan municipality organized 'neighborhood meetings' each week in a different neighborhood with participation of the metropolitan municipality mayor and urban sub-district mayors. The meetings were inspired by a 'Porte Allegro' spirit as said by the metropolitan Mayor, Osman Baydemir who gave the Brazilian example of participative budgeting as a model for democratic citizen participation in Diyarbakır. The main goal of the meetings was to 'identify the problems of the neighborhoods and residents…to resolve the problems in the neighborhoods with the residents' (Metropolitan Municipality Bulletin, 2004).

The findings of my migrant interviews in Diyarbakır also revealed that the poor migrant communities were very pleased to be under the jurisdiction of 'our [their] own' local government that is seen as something independent from the elements of the Turkish state, something 'Kurdish'. In compliance with the role assumed by the Diyarbakır municipality as the representative of the oppressed Kurds in Turkey, displaced migrant communities expected the pro-Kurdish municipality to have a broader role than that of a municipal body. The(ir) municipality was not only an elected local government body responsible for providing infrastructural and social services, but it was also the representative of the Kurds in the region, the Kurdish demands, the Kurdish struggle and the PKK that politicized displaced Kurds are organically[103], ideologically and/or emotionally attached to. Pro-Kurdish DEHAP's popularity among the displaced masses in Diyarbakır was in fact mainly due to the party's image as the legal extension of the PKK in the eye of the local people. Although it is rejected by the DEHAP representatives

that I questioned, many displaced Kurds indicated their conviction that the candidates for provincial mayor positions were selected by the imprisoned leader of the PKK. Murat, a displaced interviewee, made a statement in a parallel vein that was also mentioned in several other migrant interviewees and in one interview that I conducted with a representative of a pro-Kurdish civil society organization[104];

> …..We like the mayor [of Diyarbakır]. He has been working for the Kurdish people for years. He takes very bold steps to defend our rights…He was chosen to be the mayor by 'the president' [referring to the currently imprisoned head of the PKK]. (Murat, Migrant interview, Diyarbakır October 2004)

On the one hand, considering the domestic political conjecture, political leverage of DEHAP/DTP in the southeastern region at the local government level could have been an opportunity for the region as well as Turkish politics. First, DEHAP/DTP is successfully organized at the local level, which none of the mainstream political parties have been able to do in southeastern Turkey[105]. Second, there is a strong persistent support and sympathy from the local people for the party which is perceived as the representative of the oppressed Kurds in Turkey. Hence, DEHAP/DTP appears as the only legitimate political party among many Kurdish citizens in southeastern Turkey with

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[103] By organic relationship, I mean membership with the illegal organization, personal membership affiliation and/or affiliation of family members.

[104] Indeed, the organic relationship between the PKK and the pro-Kurdish DEHAP was something indicated freely during my causal meetings and talks with the pro-Kurdish actors and the civil society organizations. There has also been quite substantive evidence supporting the direct relationship between DEHAP and the PKK including Öcalan's own statements. But, during the formal interviews with the party members and representatives, they cautiously tried to emphasize their separateness from the PKK organizing though many freely stated their sympathy for the PKK and Öcalan.

[105] Pro-Islamist AKP (Justice and Development Party) is an exception to this. AKP has been very well organized at the local level. However, DEHAP still stands as a big challenge for the AKP in southeastern provinces especially in the local municipal government elections. DEHAP never manages to surpass the 10% threshold in the national elections, which is necessary to send representatives to the parliament. However, the party receives the majority of the votes from the southeastern provinces and therefore, takes over the municipal control in the local municipal government elections in strategic southeastern provinces such as Diyarbakır, Batman, Sirnak and Hakkari.

the potential to voice local demands and ease the political contention. Among politicized civil society groups and actors, there is a willingness to be a part of the municipality's projects and programs. The highly collaborative networks between the pro-Kurdish municipality and the civil society organizations are at first sight very promising and a positive development in resolving the local problems through combining the local political and civic resources.

On the other hand, however, DEHAP/DTP (and also its previous sister parties) has maintained organic relations with the PKK cadres, that antagonized the central state and governments towards this party. Pro-Kurdish actors have consistently avoided denouncing the PKK activities, violence and ideology. On numerous occasions, former party members have joined the PKK cadres and the party has welcomed former PKK members into its own ranks.[106] The fact that pro-Kurdish DEHAP/DTP derives its support from the local people who have had family members among the guerilla also make it impossible for the party to distance itself from the PKK and/or denounce the PKK. As I explain further in the next chapter, the party's local constituency not only sees the party as an extension of the PKK. Many displaced stated that they want the party to remain in compliance with the PKK politics and strategies. As a power actor in the region, it is the DEHAP/DTP's interest to capitalize on the local sensitivities for local support and not to agitate the local people compromising the Kurdish 'struggle'.

One important implication of the institutionalization of the identity politics at the local level is newly emerging forms of urban clientelism based on politically defined

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[106] While this statement is based on my informal meetings with these people who consider their position in the DEHAP cadres legitimate and their political right since they are not formally affiliated with the PKK anymore, there have also been political, public and media reaction towards the DEHAP's welcoming previous PKK members who served years long prison sentences due to violent terror acts.

ethnic (as well as religious) identities. In this respect, DEHAP/DTP is potentially creating new power structures among the local population that may create new urban forms of clientelist relations between the pro-Kurdish actors and their constituency through ethno-political identity. This may in turn reinforce ties of loyalty between the local migrant communities and the PKK. A kind of conflict-induced urban clientelism that the PKK is at least symbolically involved is part of the life chances of many displaced families. Even complaints about the pro-Kurdish municipality voiced during my interviews evinced the nature of the local people's affiliation with the pro-Kurdish party. The major problem stated by the displaced was the municipality's 'favoring' certain groups of people over the others especially in the cases of recruitment for municipality jobs. Limited resources of the municipality were allocated by a peculiar form of urban clientelism defined in terms of who were (more) deserving Kurds, which I discuss in the next section in this chapter. The informal favoritism pursued by the municipality was known by the poor urban communities, sometimes accepted as if it was the moral way of doing things and sometimes it was criticized severely. The following quote presents the frustration voiced by a forced migrant in Diyarbakır.

> My son is unemployed. I would like the municipality to give him a job. Certain people are favored by the municipality and they are employed in the municipality jobs…They [the municipality] should also give chances to the others… people should be employed in turns, and nobody should be favored…at the end, it [the municipality] belongs to everybody.

Municipalities around Turkey currently do not have the ability to create job opportunities for local people except the limited number of service jobs available through municipal services. This is especially true of the ones with substantively small resources despite their huge populations and serious urban problems such as Diyarbakır metropolitan municipality. Gıyaseddin, a forced migrant who happened to be the member

of the pro-Kurdish party's neighborhood commission [*Mahalle Komisyonu*] in his neighborhood, said:

> People expect the municipality to find jobs for them. They come to me to ask me to find jobs for them. I myself do not have a regular job… I tell the people that it is not the municipality's responsibility and not in its ability to find jobs for them…

He also admitted that certain 'families' should have priority for municipality-sponsored jobs and financial assistance due to their specific vulnerabilities [*Özel Durumlarından dolayı*]. Lacking the 'head of the family'- referring to single mother families, having a family member in prison, having family members killed and/or disappeared were mentioned by Gıyaseddin when I inquired about what constituted 'a specific vulnerability'. In the eyes of many local people and the pro-Kurdish municipalities, those Kurdish families have proved their commitment to the 'Kurdish cause', which rendered them socio-economically and political vulnerable in the first place since they were displaced and gave away their loved ones. Families falling into these categories definitely suffer social, economic and also political insecurities that qualify them for social assistance anyway. However, these conflict-induced 'vulnerabilities' are in turn producing certain forms of patronage relations for distribution of services and municipal opportunities based on a politically defined understanding of which citizens were more deserving '*yurtsever*[107]' Kurds than others. These are the children of the imprisoned and killed fellow Kurds or who are the 'proud' wives and mothers of the guerilla fighting in the mountains.

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[107] The term used to define the Kurds supporting the PKK and 'the Kurdish cause.'

As the articulation between the local population and the pro-Kurdish municipality was defined in ethno-political terms antagonistic towards the state, the local municipal government replaced the role of the state for many displaced families. The relationship between the displaced Kurds and the state in citizenship terms became even more extraneous as the municipal government tried to constitute its own local citizenry deriving its legitimacy from the pro-PKK politics. Very few politicized Kurds I interviewed had faith in the possibility of communication and negotiation between the pro-Kurdish municipality and the central state, despite the optimism of some:

> I expect the municipality to be our voice, to carry our problems to Ankara [meaning the central state] and to different platforms… Municipality is the only place for these people to voice their problems; they do not know how to communicate with any other state institution. So the municipality should be responsible to demand in the name of the people who demand from it, if it is unable to meet people's needs by itself. (Interview with Gıyaseddin Diyarbakır, summer 2004).

As opposed to Giyaseddin's account, for many Kurds social and economic insecurities, problems and needs are quite inseparable from the realities of the war for what the state is perceived as the only responsible side to blame. Therefore, further engagement with the central state could make the things worse not better. Displaced Kurds tend to perceive socio-economic problems such as inequality, poverty and unemployment as identity-related problems embedded in the facts that 'we have been made suffer, because we are Kurds', 'Turkish state doesn't want Kurds to eat, to have jobs or to be wealthy', 'if my children are hungry today, it is because that the Turkish state wants Kurdish kids to be weak and ill[108].' This local *ethnicized* rhetoric of the politics of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty is also promoted by the organized

[108] Interviews conducted by women and men in Diyarbakır, 2004

Kurdish groups such as the pro-Kurdish local municipalities and has further antagonized the conflict-affected Kurdish citizens of Turkey against the central state.[109] In a forced migration conference I attended in Istanbul in June 2004, pro-Kurdish municipality mayor, Osman Baydemir made his point very clear by saying '...I am not talking about poverty here, I am talking about a systematic process of getting impoverished… imposed upon this region' meaning poverty imposed upon southeastern Turkey by the Turkish state.

Among the grassroots level, this ethnicized rhetoric of poverty works as a factor of alienation from the Turkish state. Among more organized pro-Kurdish groups including the pro-Kurdish local municipalities and the party, this ethnicized rhetoric of poverty seems to be reflecting some of the major predicaments with identity-based recognition movements. Nancy Fraser summarizes them under three categories, *the problem of reification* of the politically defined group identities, *the problem of displacement* in shifting the attention from redistribution to recognition and *the problem of misframing* the actual causes of poverty and underdevelopment in an era of ethnic tensions created by broader transnational trajectories (Fraser 2003: 92). Quite parallel to Fraser's three points, since 1990s, Pro-Kurdish demands have not been articulated by the pro-Kurdish actors in social and economic terms, but rather in ethno-political terms (i.e. Kurdish language and culture). Pro-Kurdish politics has tended to reduce the entire region's social and economic underdevelopment to the conviction that the reason for the

[109] Osman Baydemir, The Mayor of the Diyarbakır Municipal Government, Forced Migration Symposium, Bilgi University, Istanbul, June 2004.

armed conflict and subsequent socio-economic misery was that the Turkish state wants to oppress the Kurdish identity, culture and language.[110]

Parallel to the discourses of the organized pro-Kurdish actors, socio-economic needs and expectations are not articulated on the ground among the displaced masses in terms of social and economic rights engaged with social justice. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, lack of (access to) social services are considered as consequences and repercussions of the ethnicized armed conflict, and state and military oppression of the Kurdish population. The central Turkish state (constructed monolithically in discursive language) is considered responsible for all the problems and instability in lives of displaced families and poverty is seen as a consequence of one's being a Kurd in Turkey. Samet, a displaced man noted

> We are happy with the municipality. It would work much better if it was not a poor municipality…The state does not like DEHAP to serve the people in our region. (Migrant interview with Samet, Diyarbakır, August 2004)

Again, to one of my questions about what they would demand from the state in terms of their concerns and everyday problems, Ahmet stated

> I want the state to be honest about what happened in the region, about what it did to us. I want compensation for my property destroyed by the army, nothing more. I do not want any favor, any help. This would dishonor me to expect anything from the state that destroyed the lives of my children… Right now, we are even ready to starve but with our honor.

Nusret another displaced young man at his early 30s stated

> I personally do not want the state to do anything for me. Today, if I am unemployed, if my children are hungry at home; it is ok as long as I believe that one day we will be given our rights as a Kurdish nation… All our problems will be resolved when the state agrees to speak with the Kurds.

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[110] Even recently elected pro-Kurdish MPs (members of parliament) in the Parliament are still going around the discourses of 'language' and 'culture' and unable (or unwilling) to incorporate in their agenda a sophisticated articulation of justice, welfare, democracy, social equity and egalitarianism (Interview with Ahmet Türk, www.yeniozgurpolitika.org, August 06 2007).

With whom the state should speak directly? (DG)

I meant the PKK, of course!

Municipality Services and Identity Politics

With a feeling of being ignored and disregarded, the pro-Kurdish municipalities in the southeast construe their roles as providers of the things that the local people have been deprived of by the central state. The priority is given to the daily needs of the poor migrant sectors of the city. In this respect, Diyarbakır municipality has initiated some social services in selective neighborhoods mainly targeting migrant women and youth. These include the Beyaz Kelebekler (White Butterflies) 'laundry houses' in socio-economically isolated neighborhoods. Women are assigned a day to do their laundry using the latest technology washing machines and dryers.

Laundry houses provide a space of socialization for women where they can leave their children in the playrooms that have a proctor and use the tea-making facility and TV equipment to entertain themselves waiting for their laundry to be washed. During my stay in Diyarbakır, there were three laundry houses in three neighborhoods; one in *Hasirli*, one in *Ben-u-Sen* and the other one in a relatively peripheral neighborhood *Aziziye*. In laundry houses, the municipality provides women with various other services including Turkish literacy classes, birth control and official marriage arrangements. Laundry houses are also designed to accommodate a nearby *tandirevi* (the earthen bread pits) for women to cook their bread in a traditional way that they are used to. Bread pits help to free the poor families from the financial burden of buying the bread, which is staple food in Kurdish households.

There are also ongoing municipality projects intended for specific segments of the urban poor including again migrant women and youth with an aim to provide vocational training (Key informant interview, Interviews with representatives from DIKASUM and Local Agenda 21-Diyarbakır). These projects are currently financed by the European Commission and partially by municipal resources. There is also close collaboration with civil society organizations and development foundations such as the Development Foundation of Turkey-Türkiye Kalkınma Vakfı (TKV) (also see Diyarbakır Municipality Web-Report, 2005).

During my visit to another southeastern province, Van, I was also informed by the mayor of a district municipality affiliated with the pro-Kurdish DEHAP that her municipality was about to initiate four different projects with financial support from the European Commission and several Europe-based civil society organizations; a temporary shelter houses project for the poorest migrant families in need, a health center and a carpet and Tricotage fabric workshop project. Municipality projects and services are effective means for the pro-Kurdish party to expand its networks even within marginalized neighborhoods and broaden its constituency.

Project-based social services are not limited to the pro-Kurdish municipal activities in Diyarbakır. Indeed, pro-Islamists are quite active on the ground among their own constituency.[111] From micro-credit to 'food bank' projects, the pro-Islamist AKP has initiated several poverty alleviation plans in Diyarbakır since 2002. One of the pro-

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[111] Despite pro-Islamists being the second party after the pro-Kurdish party in Diyarbakır in the 2002 national elections, the pro-Kurdish party did not pass the 10% national election threshold necessary for the parties to send MPs to the parliament. There were four pro-Islamist Diyarbakır MPs (Members of Parliament) in the Turkish Parliament between 2002 and July 2007. After the latest general elections in July 2007, Diyarbakir is currently represented in the Turkish Parliament by six pro-Islamist MPs and four pro-Kurdish MPs.

Islamist Diyarbakır MPs (Member of Parliament), Aziz Akgül, is actually known as the 'walking project office' of his party. He has started various poverty alleviation projects in Turkey, with priority given to the southeast. The most important of all is the micro-credit project of Muhammed Yunus, with which Akgül has primarily targeted poor middle-aged and elderly women in Diyarbakır's rural and urban areas. In presence of Muhammed Yunus of Grameen Bank, Akgül initiated the micro-credit project implementation in Turkey, first in Diyarbakır in 2003 to be expanded to other provinces across Turkey. The target group of the project was defined as "women and unemployed youth; landless peasants; small-scale peasantry; abandoned street children; forest peasants and unemployed elderly" (TBMM 2003).

The goal of the project was defined as "alleviating poverty and disseminating welfare". Akgül further proposed that the aim of the micro-credit was to turn 'every household into a workshop' for production (TBMM 2003). Akgül is also the founding father of the controversial 'food bank' project in Diyarbakır, which provides the poor with free food stuff donated by major Turkish food companies. For his poverty alleviation efforts-- practices based on 'target group' mentality to deal with problems--, Akgül was given the title of *the father of the poor* (*fakir babası*) by his party. As a native of Diyarbakır coming from an ordinary Kurdish family, a Ph.D. holder in Business Administration and a former Turkish army affiliate, Akgül stands in the showroom of the pro-Islamist AKP as a model MP representing the southeast. His success, previous affiliation with the Turkish army, position in politics in a way confirms the traditional welcoming stance of the Turkish state towards the Kurdish citizens.

Akgül is, however, not very popular among local people in neighborhoods that I conducted my interviews. A shop owner that I chatted in one of the migrant-concentrated

neighborhoods showed me a thick booklet about Akgül projects in Diyarbakır including the food banks and micro-credit opportunities. The booklet was given to the shop owner by Akgül himself who visited each and every shop in the neighborhood and distributed his booklet. I asked the shop owner if I could keep the booklet; "go ahead and keep it, I do not need to know about his projects, who he thinks he is…a sneaky politician trying to beat off the power of the DEHAP…"

Local constitute of DEHAP/DTP is quite aware that having access to Akgül projects requires voting for the AKP in the elections, which is considered a betrayal of the Kurdish cause. In a parallel vein, my interview with another pro-Islamist Kurdish MP, Ali İhsan Merdanoğlu, revealed that the micro-credit project had started to be implemented in localities where there was the strongest support for the pro-Islamist party, those areas primarily included the rural and district areas of the province of Diyarbakır. Yet, the antipathy towards the pro-Islamist party among politicized local Kurds had less to do with the pro-Islamists being 'Islamist' and more to do with the pro-Islamists being anti to the pro-Kurdish cause. Otherwise, local Kurdish communities are quite conservative in religious terms.

Both the pro-Kurdish DEHAP/DTP and the pro-Islamist AKP have in turn been establishing their own patronage relations in rural and urban areas of Diyarbakır capitalizing on social and economic insecurities of the local people using service provisions as a reward mechanism. Social assistance, services and poverty alleviation projects provide the means for the pro-Kurdish and pro-Islamist actors to recruit supporters and gather local votes in exchange for temporary social and economic survival. While, DEHAP/DTP tries to make sure that municipality services and

provisions are channeled towards the Kurds who support the Kurdish cause[112], peculiar forms of rituals have characterized the process of receiving pro-Islamist micro-credit.

Limited municipal aid is meant to go to the *Yurtsever* families (families whose members are involved in the 'Kurdish Mücadele/Struggle' such as families of prisoners, guerillas and militia (milis)). *Yurtsever* families are the first priority of the pro-Kurdish municipality because they are assumed to be 'most committed' to the 'struggle', and most vulnerable and needy due to their lacking male members and consequently suffering economic, social and political insecurity (Interview with a representative from a neighborhood commission who was responsible for identifying the 'poor families' to distribute food aid, Diyarbakır, summer 2004; see also my interview notes with Giyaseddin in the section above). In a similar vein, I was told anecdotal stories on several occasions by local journalists and academics about how beneficiaries of the micro-credit in Diyarbakır were asked by the pro-Islamist party members to give their words to pay off their debts in presence of a Quran in order to prove their being decent Muslims and supporters of the pro-Islamist party[113]. Both political groups try to identity their own 'deserving citizens' based on a politically defined Kurdish identity and Islamist identity.

Indeed, the social assistance provisions including workshop activities, micro-credit implementations and food bank projects are not likely to promise eradication of poverty in the long-term in face of structural unemployment and underdevelopment in Diyarbakır and in the southeast in general. They rather discipline poor rural and urban

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[112] In my interviews and causal conversation with he pro-Kurdish municipality members and social workers, they also assumed that service beneficiaries were and/or should have been the party supporters.

[113] Similarly, Buğra and Keyder (2003), in their research on poverty and citizens' access to social state provisions in Istanbul note that pro-Islamist municipalities in Istanbul also make sure that municipal aid goes to the 'good Muslims' who are considered as 'deserving' citizens.

masses according to the rationality of the market economy. They make certain groups of citizens more able to tackle poverty on a temporary basis. However, these practices supported by the broader processes of transnational economic restructuring (as food banks and micro-credit are supported by the IMF and World Bank across the world and other local government services are financed by funds from European Commission geared towards supporting decentralization as well as poverty management) create political patronage relations that subtly and obliquely strengthen the local grounds of ethnic and religious identity politics in Turkey (and across the globe). Likewise, recent processes of decentralization across Turkey pose significant threats by encouraging institutional entrenchment of ethnic and religious politics (and cleavages) across Turkey.

CONCLUSION

What do conflict-induced migrants want? Is theirs a quest for justice or more? Why do not the voices raised find echo in national politics and are the demands marginalized? How would justice be done in Southeastern Turkey? Within a spectrum, local demands voiced in interviews range from compensation for the damages to access to homelands; from an amnesty for the imprisoned and the guerilla to exercising Kurdish culture, education in Kurdish language and to a lesser extent an independent Kurdish state. The Turkish state is mainly seen as *'the enemy;'* and there is no solid faith in peaceful negotiation.

The state is not present in the lives of the Kurds affected by the conflict and displacement as a socio-economic and political guarantor to heal the wounds of the past and to ensure a secure present and future. It is then not surprising that forced migrant Kurds question their affiliation with the Turkish state while establishing linkages with the Kurdish movement and organized pro-Kurdish actors as they see that as the only option

available for social, economic and political security. They have developed a particular understanding of their experiences with political violence, which they consider as a consequence of their belonging to the 'Kurdish ethnicity.' The general articulation of the situation in this respect is parallel to how Sait "came to the realization that" he was displaced because he was a Kurd as he states "…now I know what to be a Kurd is and what the PKK has been fighting for."

Identity-based demands are mostly even prioritized over demands for material compensation and return. Demands are expressed around this ethnicized perception of one's experiences with violence, which in turn defines how displaced Kurds see their way out of the war, violence and poverty through recognition of Kurdish identity and cultural rights. As Ahvelat noted "[u]nless we are given our rights, our situation will not improve and the conflict will not end." Displaced Kurds have in turn become a part of the 'Kurdish struggle' and the 'Kurdish movement' for recognition of Kurdish identity and a discursively defined form of political autonomy in southeastern Turkey. A significant portion of the displaced Kurds in southeastern city centers like Diyarbakır now ideologically follow and are tied to the PKK via their *blood* meaning that they have their *blood* among the PKK members, but also that their *blood* got wasted by the Turkish security forces during the counter-guerilla operations.

CHAPTER 5

A FOCUS ON WOMEN:

A GENDERED ANALYSIS OF VIOLENCE, CITIZENSHIP AND PRO-KURDISH RESISTANCE

This chapter aims to clarify and add to the preceding discussion by focusing on the experiences of the displaced women within the general pro-Kurdish politicization and mobilization. I suggest that dramatic social and political transformations in conflict times entail changing power dynamics with repercussions in private and public arenas. Women's position in, and engagement with, those spheres differs substantially from that of men. This study particularly aims to elucidate that Kurdish women's subjugation as well as liberation/emancipation is strongly embedded in power relations at the familial, communal/local, national and international level, changing and shaping during and after the years of intense conflict and political violence in southeastern Turkey. The context of the social, economic and political transformations wrought by the armed conflict is imperative to imagine the social and political spaces of empowerment for ordinary Kurdish civilians carrying the most hardship.

Throughout this dissertation there are three main processes that come to the fore in discussions, which I will apply to the specific case of women in southeastern Turkey in this chapter. 1) Processes of the conflict and displacement have opened up social and political maneuvering spaces for local people in Southeastern Turkey making them visible in public as well as in politics but in exchange for poverty, unemployment and social insecurity. 2) Increasing salience of Kurdish ethno-nationalism has had debilitating implications for citizenship consolidation, civic consciousness and demand-making in southeastern Turkey; as articulation between the central state-local (Kurdish) citizens has

been further hampered due to declining legitimacy of the state and the politicized Kurdish citizens in each other's respect. 3) Declining social state and penetration of neo-liberal rationality and its policy practices among the poor urban migrant communities has dubious long-term implication especially for socio-economic well-being of vulnerable social groups and distributive justice in southeastern Turkey.

Using a gendered perspective, I illustrate some of the specificities of these three processes considering the changing nature of state-society relations in southeastern in terms of a state-citizen legitimacy problem, ethno-nationalist claims and a problem of poverty and social citizenship. All three processes above-mentioned are intertwined with each other within the context of the changing state-society relations in the southeast and entail contradictory dynamics concomitantly enhancing and hampering women's ability to make demands, to make their voices heard as well as to make a change at the policy level. These three processes further bring in question the contradictory dynamics therein a group of ethnically distinct women's agency might or might not turn into an emancipatory, inclusive, democratic force in face of divisive ethnicized conflict, political violence and poverty.

Social and political spaces opened throughout the years of violence have enabled many Kurdish women to question traditional gender relations and norms. Exploiting the changing power dynamics in their families, especially through a redefinition of women's power vis a vis the declining social, cultural and economic leverage of the male kin in the families, many Kurdish women have been more assertive in their familial relations and visible in the public sphere. Though, most of the time this visibility is limited to their proximate neighborhood and still strictly scrutinized by fathers, brothers and husbands. Killings, disappearances and arrest of men have brought women into decision-making

positions and also facilitated their encounters with organized pro-Kurdish civil actors including the pro-Kurdish political party, bar associations, migrant and human rights associations.

Rights discourses including human and cultural rights and the notion of democracy have been internalized by many Kurdish women as a part of their experiences with the armed conflict, displacement and violence. This particular political awareness has enabled many Kurdish women, young and elderly to engage in political demand-making as activists that has become manifest with presence and even sometimes overrepresentation of women in pro-Kurdish street protests. This particular awareness at the very personal level is indeed tied to the transnational rights discourses discursively understood and imagined by the women in the process of seeing themselves as legitimate political actors with demands and particular agendas to realize.

In a parallel vein, Kurdish feminist organizing has experienced fragmentation and disorientation with the priorities of the pro-Kurdish politics overshadowing women's demands and interests and also with the impediment entrenched in radical ethnic politics against negotiating with the state in a reciprocal state-citizens articulation. Grassroots mobilization subservient to the radical ethno-nationalist factions, rather than engagement with women's rights, interests and concerns have further contributed to dissemination of partisan politics on the ground without democratic civic consciousness.

Political radicalization and increasing resonance of antagonistic perception of the state among the conflict-induced migrant communities go hand in hand with impoverishment and unemployment in the provincial centers of southeastern Turkey. Especially, with the lack of and/or distortion of the traditional social safety nets, women have found themselves in impoverishment and socio-economic insecurity. Burdens of

conflict and displacement have coupled with the already limited existence of the state as a social guarantor in the region. Along with the declining ability and willingness of the social state to be the service provider for vulnerable social classes, the penetration of neo-liberal policy practices into provincial centers, in the form of social services and target group programs have brought in peculiar changes into the everyday lives of poor migrant women. While mitigating the burden of poverty, and increasing women's social visibility in the city life, the role of neo-liberal practices in women's gaining a social agency is still dubious.

DISCOVERING WOMEN'S 'AGENCY' IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT

Indeed, "[t]he incorporation of civilians into contemporary conflicts has been a highly gendered practice," that require systematic gendered perspectives to disentangle social, economic and political processes at local, national and international level (Giles and Hyndman 2004: 5). As Rajasingham-Senanayake (2004) notes "[v]iolence is no longer merely the business of male combatants and trained militaries"; but rather diffused into the domain of civilians-male, female, children, elderly etc.- with palpable socio-economic and political; physical, psychological and emotional faces. Women and men have experienced wars and violence in gender-differentiated ways. As earlier forms of traditional social relations and networks are broken down by the dynamics of conflict and displacement; previous systems and structures of power and justice change considerably; gendered power relations are redefined as new forms of patriarchy and of systems of subjugating women emerge in the destination areas.

A gendered approach to the aftermath of the armed conflict and displacement entails critical juxtaposition of processes through which women assert themselves in

demand-making and in a quest for social space, justice, rights and inclusion on the one hand; and broader social relations, systems and structural dynamics that render women marginalized, excluded and/or subjugated on the other. A gendered perspective to analyze political violence as 'a form of conflict[114]' (Braubaker 1998:425) indeed enables us to "explore the possibilities for changing power imbalances" in which women have to maneuver to survive and socially, culturally and politically assert their interests, demands and expectations (Giles and Hyndman, 2004:4). Previous research cognizant of gender has revealed that women still tend to remain powerless in face of conflict-driven changes that bring physical, social, economic and political vulnerabilities and insecurities both for them and their male counterparts.

Conflict dynamics rarely work for the interests of women enabling them to capitalize on radical transformations in traditional systems of subordination. Furthermore, (some) women's organized attempts in conflict geographies to promote peace have not succeeded in creating substantive impact for social and political reconciliation (Koraj 2006 for example calls the limited success of anti-war women's groups in former Yugoslavia the 'politics of *small steps*'). Ruptures in, and the collapse of, previous social systems and arrangements may empower women at home and/or in public life in certain ways whilst further subjugating them in many other ways. Nor do spaces for positive change opened up through conflict transformation necessarily refer to long lasting gender transformations (Cockburn 2004: 41).

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[114] Here I agree with both Wieviorka's and Braubaker and Laitin's conceptualization of violence as a form of conflict rather than a consequence of conflict. Brubaker and Laitin (1998:425) defines violence as "a form of conflict", "a social and political action in its own right" rather than a consequence or a degree of conflict. Wieviorka (1999) further argues that violence emerges when politicized actors are not able to negotiate with the power holders.

Civilians, including women's, involvement in identity-based conflicts have been, further complicated, contradictory and controversial in such that political violence and its repercussions such as displacement could work as catalysts in enhancing social agency, political consciousness and community organizing for peace, justice, reconstruction and reconciliation and/or in contributing to deepening social cleavages, identity politics of exclusion and political radicalization and militancy. Feminist analysis has become enthusiastically interested in gender aspects of identity conflicts informing about embedded issues of power relations, differentials and social, economic and political subordination at the level of family, community and nation that women are situated in ethnic, class and other structural terms (Cockburn 1998, Kaldor 1999, Moser & Clark, 2001, Giles and Hyndman 2004, 2004a; Rajasingham-Senanayake 2004, Koraj 2006).

An important strand of feminist research has further critically been engaged with the roles of women to perpetuate identity-based violence and/or promote peace against exclusionary, violent and regressive constructions of ethnic, religious and nationalist identities (Cockburn 1998, Kaldor 1999, Koraj 2006, also see Moser & Clark, 2001, Giles and Hyndman, 2003;). This strand of critical feminist analysis warn us against essentialist understanding of 'womanhood' and 'feminism' as well as of primordial conceptions of 'ethnicity', 'identity', 'community' and 'nation' (see especially Cockburn 1998, Kaldor 1999, and also Koraj 2006). Scholars such as Kaldor (1999) bring in question the 'identity' politics prevalent in contemporary wars and its destructiveness in terms of introducing divisions within communities as well as among women situated differently in ethnic and other social terms (also see Cockburn 1998). Kaldor (1999) further points out the imperativeness of organizations around alternative forms of political consciousness and mobilization promoting civic consciousness and crosscutting

social alliances instead of ethnic politics among women to fight against the divisiveness of armed conflicts and civil wars.

As in other cases of political violence and conflict-induced displacement (see the edited volumes Moser and Clark, 2001 and Giles and Hyndman, 2004), the armed conflict and the emergence of a Kurdish movement around the PKK ideology have been in fact gendered coupled with a class component. Not only have Kurdish women and men experienced the conflict and political violence in different ways, but also their involvements have been distinct and their politicization through the processes of the conflict including displacement/uprootedness has been different. In the same vein, groups of Kurdish women from different socio-economic classes (i.e. middle class and professional women vs. urban poor and rural migrant women) have experienced the armed conflict and its consequences in various scales.

Throughout the radical social, economic and political changes that hit women hardest because of their structural subordination, women have developed different identities (including a political one), strived for different hopes and expectations than men, and struggled for different rights and a different notion of justice. The city and its settings have had a drastically different meaning for Kurdish migrant women as compared to men. As Merteens points out in her research on displaced women in Columbia; "one of the most striking gender contrasts is that women, unlike men, seem to gain some autonomy and visualize new horizons for their life projects in the urban environment" (Merteens, 2001: 134). Even in the case of exploitation of female labor when men are unable to find jobs, new challenges face Kurdish women, such as a public struggle over their earnings and for social mobility, which push the boundaries of their assertiveness within the existing patriarchal relations in family and in their community

(Şen, 2005). A representative of a regional women's NGO in the Southeastern province of Diyarbakır states

> [Kurdish Women] have found leverage points in order to breakdown the traditional gender relations imposed upon them for years. Not only becoming a part of the city and all the spaces of the city, but also the difficulties, hardship, violence and suppression faced, have weakened the men and empowered the women in their relationship with the men… The notion of 'honor' which imprisoned Kurdish women for centuries has been redefined… Women have entered into a clash with the social and cultural heterogeneity they see in the city and through the media; these processes have forced Kurdish women to search for new meanings in their lives and to develop new visions. (Interview with the director of the ASVWR", Diyarbakır, July 2004)

Women and men have been integrated (or unable to integrate) into the urban centers in different ways and to different degrees. The urban environment was actually not that alien for Kurdish men since they had moved back and forth between the rural areas and the urban centers even before the conflict and displacement, mostly due to seasonal jobs they would take in the cities or their ordinary trade relations. For women, the city was an alien setting, imposing a new definition of 'private' and 'public', a dramatic challenge to reorganize their lives based on the new 'ways of doing things'. Throughout this radical experience, young women especially looked for spaces to breathe and maintain their dignity. Twenty seven year-old Merve states:

> My father used to be a porter [*Hamal*], and then he fell very sick. My two brothers were very young and attending the school, they could not work. My sister and I started to look for jobs. I was ready to work outside, maybe in a textile factory where some of the young women that I know work. But my father and mother did not agree with me going out by myself. My uncle had also a bad influence on my father. We [her sister and herself] started to do some needle work at home to earn some money… But I was very frustrated…. I talked to my uncle's daughter, Züleyha, I convinced her to come to the literacy class with me here at DIKASUM [Diyarbakır Municipality Women's Center]. I told my father that there would be only women and it would be very good for me to have some command of reading. Fortunately he and my uncle agreed… We are no longer in the village; we are in a big city. Life is different here…, if you have some reading [skills], it is very good for you… you gain some confidence, if one day I start working outside, I will feel

> myself much safer in the city, I won't look around with illiterate eyes (Merve, Interview, Diyarbakır, 2004).

Both women and men now know that they have to face a different future; and their perceptions of the future(s) are projected differently. Women in the new private and public domains have to find ways not only to assert themselves as actors of change but also as actors of resistance and struggle within the changing social, economic and cultural context in which the previous patriarchal systems are redefined, but also reproduced. Despite the overwhelming and oppressive social and political circumstances, women are capable of dealing with the implications and consequences of their experiences as much as they are able to make sense out of them. A form of agency for women (as well as men) is reshaped throughout their social and political experiences with the conflict and the political violence.

Agency is an important element of analysis to understand the implications of the conflict and its aftermath for individuals. It not only refers to what women 'do' but also who they are (being) (Merteens, 2001 and Sen, 1989). In this respect, women's agency is their ability to speak and decide for themselves, to distance themselves from the previous patriarchal structures of family and kinship, to deal with tragedies of the conflict and displacement. It is also their capacity to search for justice, to speak in the name of their lost husbands and sons, to develop survival strategies for themselves and their families and their willingness to be active agents of change for themselves and also for the 'Kurdish struggle'. Drawing upon Jelin's and Fraser's conceptualization of justice, the way that I read Kurdish women's agency in southeastern Turkey refers to their political consciousness and capability to seek *justice* in legal, political, socio-

economic and cultural terms. [115]The 'agency' of women is not necessarily a political activism, but rather women's ability to evaluate the past under the present circumstances, to assess the situation back in the village in terms of the city and of the contemporary political situation and their capability (though limited) to make demands in regard to their social and political, human and women's rights.

The processes of agency are further complicated. In the urban setting, some women have faced constraints and/or possibilities in the face of reconfiguration of the traditional social control mechanisms and gender hierarchies as well as traditional social safety nets. They have become socially mobile after their husbands were taken away (murder, disappearances, arrest, joining the guerilla) and pushed to work outside the home, most of the time doing undesirable domestic work and in some cases engaging in prostitution[116]. Also, the conflict has made many Kurdish women become fierce political activists fighting for the 'Kurdish struggle' in reaction to experiences with displacement, murder, violence and torture that they or their family members (especially husbands and sons) faced. So, agency cannot be defined simply as something that is 'liberating/emancipating', but rather should be conceptualized in terms of the 'politics of

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[115] An engagement with the notion of justice rather than 'Kurdish identity' is necessary to acknowledge and deal with social inequalities, and social, economic and political fragmentation among the Turkish Kurds as well as to establish solidarities and alliances across women in Turkey situated differently in ethnic, class and other social terms. An articulate mutual culture of citizenship between the state and (Kurdish) citizens, restored trust relations and a strengthened welfare state to guarantee social equity for socio-economically subordinated classes would also help for emancipatory, inclusive and democratic forces dealing with women's problems and subordination in southeastern Turkey in face of divisive ethnicized conflict, political violence, traditional/tribal oppression and poverty.

[116] Prostitution has recently emerged as a widespread social problem in Diyarbakır- in the agendas of civil society organizations dealing with women and their problems (Aker, et.al, 2006). Although I did not ask specific questions about this issue due to its sensitivity; in some interviews mainly the ones conducted with women, there were occasions that the women pointed out the prevalence of prostitution among young single women. One interviewee living with her children with no husband did not hesitate to reveal that her oldest daughter was not living with the family anymore, working in an infamous 'night club' and would visit the family occasionally to bring some money for her siblings.

survival' as a process of re-socialization, politicization and social mobilization to struggle for social space, justice and rights as well as to make ends meet on a daily basis.

Notwithstanding the possibilities of opening socio-political maneuvering spaces for women under radical conflict-induced transformation at familial and communal level, stressing women's 'agency' may result in overlooking the social economic, cultural and political processes of the conflict and political violence that disempower women in many ways and render them powerless in face of the overwhelming forces of radical transformation. Starting from the late 1990s, many Kurdish women systematically committed suicide, especially in the southeastern province of Batman. Despite inquisitions to attribute a kind of conscious political motivation to those acts, with the same logic as suicide bombing but in a self-sacrificial pacifist manner (Bozarslan, 2004), in-depth research supports the idea that those committing suicide were women caught in-between traditional/rural and newly emerging/urban forms of patriarchal relations, escaping their destiny (Halis 2001).

Those acts of suicide, conducted in a chain reaction manner, have attracted academic, policy and media attention to the women's motivation for ending their lives (see Halis 2001, Oktay-Yilmaz 2003). A kind of feminist consciousness and civil society awareness (that might be called collective agency) emerged among organized women (Kurdish and Turkish) as a means of understanding the conflict and migration related causes of female suicide and its relation with traditional tribal systems of women's oppression, as well as to prevent the other young women committing suicide. Women's individual and collective agency is in fact a product of those overwhelming social transformations which should be recognized and examined accordingly. A gendered approach, in fact, enables us not only to discover the agency of women but also those

forces imposing social, economic and political, in other words structural, constraints on potential agencies.

RISING 'FEMALE/FEMINIST' CONSCIOUSNESS VS. RISING ETHNO-NATIONALISM IN SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY

Although originally a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement, the PKK mobilized the grassroots as a 'nationalist' movement, aiming to carve an independent Kurdish state out of Turkey's official boundaries and to spread its ideology to the neighboring states populated predominately by Kurds. Grassroots mobilization of the organization in this respect was around the promise of an independent 'Kurdistan' for the Kurdish rural masses mired in poverty and oppressed by the Kurdish tribal system as well as marginalized by the Turkish state. In the same way as the earlier Kurdish nationalist discourses of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the PKK discourse heavily drew upon the role and importance of women in the 'Kurdish struggle' and 'nationalist movement.'(For an eloquent account of the 'woman question' in Kurdish Nationalist Discourse of the late Ottoman Period, see Klein, 2001, also see Rygiel 1998 for a more contemporary discussion). Incorporation of 'women' into the discourses of the PKK is a part of the movement's project to attack and challenge the traditional feudal system. PKK organizing had to break down traditional feudal power structures in order to mobilize support for guerilla activities. The PKK was in fact very well organized, especially in areas with the least powerful tribal structures and many tribes considered the organization as a challenge to their status quo therefore preferring to collaborate with the Turkish security forces in the village guard system.

Hence, the PKK systematically and pragmatically incorporated 'women' into its discourses as a means of challenging the very foundations of the feudal culture that

subjugates women severely by the notion of 'honor' defined through women's 'purity'. Secondly, as a guerilla organization, the PKK needed female 'warriors' to help populate its guerilla ranks. It also needed female activists to disseminate its ideology. Many Kurdish females have joined the PKK organizing in Turkey, in the neighboring countries in which the PKK has been physically based as well as in the European Diaspora where the PKK has been extracting financial and political support. In fact, the emergence of the PKK has had important, but contradictory, implications for rising 'female consciousness' in Southeastern Turkey, on the one hand, and for the exploitation of women and their bodies (PKK protagonist, guerilla, suicide bomber or self-immolator) for political ends, on the other.

The emergence of Kurdish feminist discourses has been associated with the PKK ideologies and the representation of women in the PKK-sponsored 'Kurdish nationalist struggle'. It has also developed in relation to other forms of feminisms in Turkey, including secular Turkish and Islamist feminisms (Arat, 2004). Kurdish women's own experiences with the conflict and the political violence that were distinct from their male counterparts have also enabled some of them to distance themselves from the PKK-sponsored 'emancipation' discourses written by males (i.e. the head of the organization, Abdullah Öcalan) as well as from the Turkish feminist discourses that do not understand the specific situation of the Kurdish women.

The PKK ideology and sympathy for it are currently quite conspicuous in Kurdish feminist circles in civil society organizations in southeastern Turkey, especially among the ones affiliated with the pro-Kurdish political party (DEHAP/DTP). As a representative of a regional Women's NGO, affiliated with the local pro-Kurdish

municipality states, certain segments of Kurdish feminist circles explicitly or subtly sympathize with the PKK.

> We benefit a lot from the ideas and writings of Öcalan [the head of the PKK] in order to develop an ideological basis for our activities and for our future activities. It is he first of all, questioning the oppression of women in our society… (Key informant interview with the director of the ASVWR (Association for Vulnerable Women's Rights- a pseudonym for privacy and security purposes Diyarbakır, summer 2004)

In spite of the PKK influence among the Kurdish activist groups, the armed conflict and political violence have pushed the limits of feminist/female consciousness in southeastern Turkey as well as in Turkey in general. The political violence imposed on the rural areas by the fighting between the Turkish security forces and the PKK has been carried into the urban centers with the extrajudicial practices of the emergency rule (including forced migration) which rendered any civilian authority powerless in face of the increasing militarization of the region and with the forced migrations of thousands of rural Kurds into the city centers in search of safety.

The conflict discursively opened a highly politicized space for the civil society to come together, to unite and act together in provincial centers like Diyarbakır during the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, civic organizing was highly radical and involved with the 'Kurdish movement' and 'human rights' rather than specifically interested in women's problems and suffering (Gambetti, 2005). While incorporating women into its 'nationalist discourse', the PKK was not interested in the emergence of an independent feminist consciousness in the region and/or among its ranks. The first women's organization in southeastern Turkey, KA-MER (Women's Center) was founded in 1997-its first support came from Istanbul-based Turkish feminist circles- and its founder was an ordinary elementary school teacher who became committed to the issue of Kurdish women's

oppression before and after the armed conflict through her and her husband's experiences with violence in 1980s and 1990s (Gambetti, 2005). As Gambetti notes;

> The state eyed her suspiciously for having been an activist…. officially stigmatized as being pro-PKK. The Kurdish movement, on the other hand, criticized her for introducing a division within the movement between men and women. Women's rights came after human rights and the Kurdish movement considered itself as having other priorities (Gambetti, 2005:63).

Kurdish women's movement was, especially entrapped in between the bifurcated political environment during the armed conflict years. Polarization between the 'state-friendly' civic forces and the civic and political agendas inclined towards the PKK ideology was ineluctable in the face of radical politicization. The political space available for women's mobilization, such as the one initiated by KA-MER, independent from the ethno-nationalist politics and also the state subservience, was limited to cultivate. KA-MER established alliances with Turkish feminist circles in the 1990s to attract attention to the occurrence of honor-killings and suicide among young migrant Kurdish women. Especially starting from the end of the 1990s, parallel to the declining political tension in the region, this organization has managed to create a kind of synergy between various groups of Kurdish and Turkish feminists. However, it could not escape criticism from more politicized Kurdish feminist circles that accused KA-MER for being a 'pragmatist, elite organization' aloof from Kurdish reality and struggle (Interview with a pro-Kurdish female activist, Diyarbakır, 2004).

State antagonism towards 'suspicious' Kurds on the one hand, increasing salience of ethno-nationalist and chauvinist tendencies in the Kurdish movement and among the grassroots on the other hand have hindered a coherent, prudent, representative and legitimate pro-Kurdish mobilization in Turkey. In a parallel vein, Kurdish feminist organizing has experienced fragmentation and disorientation with the priorities of the

pro-Kurdish politics overshadowing women's demands and interests and also with the impediment entrenched in radical ethnic politics to negotiate with the state in a reciprocal state-citizens articulation. Grassroots mobilization subservient to the radical ethno-nationalist factions, rather than engagement with women's rights, interests and concerns have further contributed to dissemination of partisan politics on the ground lacking democratic civic consciousness.

Partisan politics and affiliation with the ethno-nationalist circles have characterized the agendas of various female/feminist groups. Grassroots initiatives such as Peace Mothers (Bariş Anneleri)- Kurdish guerilla mothers and Democratic Free Women Initiative (Demokratik Özgür Kadin Haraketi) have developed in close affiliation with the women's branches of the pro-Kurdish political party (DEHAP/DTP). Those pro-PKK initiatives have been unable to gather sympathy either from the Turkish media or the public, civil society and politicians due to their contradictory stance as supposedly being peace seekers, but unable to distance themselves from the discourse of war, whose members are concomitantly advocates of the PKK and its imprisoned leader Öcalan.[117] Meryem, a displaced woman in her 50s, affiliated with the Peace Mothers, states in a manner ironic to her stance as a 'peace' seeker

> I think with such an attitude of the state, the war will never end. My son got killed in the fighting; now I am more than ready to send his daughter to the mountain to fight for peace! (Interview with Meryem, Diyarbakır, fall 2004)

Pro-PKK politics have dominated these grassroots women initiatives as almost 'mystical' nationalist sentiments are associated with women's suffering and subjugation in the region with no concrete social, economic and political basis provided in their

ambiguous agendas (see for example Amigra 2006). In a parallel vein, Kurdish female/feminist consciousness has been unable to gather forces that could go beyond ethnic, ideological and class divisions. As Moser and Clark (2001:9) point out "[t]his challenges assumptions that women's gender identity, as a unifying force, transcends all other identities…while women's agency can be supportive, it can also be divisive for the women's movement." Ethno-nationalist tendencies among the Kurdish female activists and radical politicization among the grassroots risk legitimacy of many pro-Kurdish women's groups and organizations' as democratic civic actors vis a vis moderate, less politicized Kurdish feminists as well as the state circles of decision making.

Towards the end of the 1990s PKK was losing its strength as well as international support. During those years, the nature of the violence waged by the organization changed significantly. During late 1990s, there happened a substantial increase in the number of suicide attacks and self-immolation protests committed by the young PKK militants, especially the female, in Turkey and Europe suggesting that weakening guerilla forces were looking for other spaces than rural areas to carry on their violent protest activities using young (predominately female) bodies (see Bozarslan 2004: 24). My own interpretation of this seemingly gendered phenomenon based on my discussion with the local people as well as with the previous PKK members is that female guerilla perceives her body (or her body is perceived) physically less competent for the guerilla war on the mountains and see the suicide tactic as a rational option to achieve her highest potential for giving damage and killing. It was also mentioned in my talks with the guerilla

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[117] See for example Amigra, 05/03/2006, Demokratik Ozgur Kadin haraketinden 8 Mart Cagrisi [March 8 Decleration from the Democratic Free Women Movement].

families and the local people that it was easier for female militia to guise herself against police surveillance and stage self-immolation events and/or suicide attacks in crowded city centers[118].

In the interviews that I conducted with the conflict-affected Kurdish communities in 2004, those guerillas who lost their lives in these self-destructive and violent occasions are called 'the martyrs of democracy' and the 'heroes and heroines of the Kurdish struggle', and their pictures together with the pictures of their fellows killed on the mountains decorated with flowers and the PKK colors are today hung on the walls in many houses in southeastern Turkey. Their deaths are perceived brutal but also sacred and necessary to make the unheard voices heard by the domestic public as well as the international community. Suicide attacks and self-immolation acts stopped when the leader of the organization, Öcalan, declared a ceasefire after he was arrested in Kenya and the PKK guerilla forces withdrew from the Turkish territory into Northern Iraq (Bozarslan 2004). Until the year 2004, PKK induced political unease in Turkey declined. After ending the ceasefire in 2004, the PKK has recently started using the female militia one more time in its attempt to stage terrorist attacks in city centers in Turkey. It is indeed ironic that many civilian Kurdish women have been victimized by the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish security forces, while many young Kurdish women in search of a social status and liberation from tribal oppression have joined the guerilla, became 'terrorists', 'heroines', victims and victimizers all at once.

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[118] In 1998 and 1999, for example, there happened eight suicide attacks and sixty four self-immolation acts committed by the PKK militants in Turkey and in Europe, with four other people killed and dozens more injured (see Bozarslan 2004: 24)

The civic potential in Southeastern Turkey is currently limited in its capacity to transform the social, economic and political problems of the region into meaningful demand-making. Indeed, understanding the trajectories that women go through during radical social and political transformations and their relation to self-consciousness and demands for change requires a differentiation between 'two types of gender consciousness: female and feminist consciousness' (Peteet, 1992). According to Peteet, female consciousness refers to the language of rights and aims to enhance women's position within the existing social order. Female consciousness tries to make women more able to deal with the circumstances and exploit social, cultural, political and legal channels to demand their rights *within* the system. Feminist consciousness, on the other hand, requires more; it strives to *transform* the existing system and social order (such as familial, communal or national) (Peteet, 1992). In this respect, organized women not only have to assert the rights of the Kurdish women within the existing system of citizenship culture and practice. They also have to struggle to transform the systems of repression, exclusion and violence in the region, which are not only the creations of the Turkish state, but also the products of years-long PKK-led radicalization in the region and Kurdish feudal/tribal structures resistant to secularization and democratization.

Feminist consciousness waged by the local NGOs such as KA-MER that seeks to stop, for instance, 'honor-killings' in the region does not only have to focus on 'survival' strategies for the women targeted, such as legal help, police assistance and shelter to insulate them from the threat coming from the familial and communal circles, but also has to demand change in "a host of social, economic, cultural, political, and religious structures" that "produced and reproduced honor-killing" before, during and after the conflict and violence (Mojab, 2004:128). In the same vein, politically active Kurdish

women who engage with the state in terms of the contingencies of the political violence and displacement have to protect themselves within a state structure hostile towards civil participation especially in predominately Kurdish provinces. They also have to distance themselves from radical ethno-nationalist political agendas overshadowing women's specific problems, rights, concerns and demands. They are further compelled to make demands on the state to change the repressive power dynamics of gender, class and ethnic relations in Turkey. While the PKK-initiated politicization has introduced a kind of 'female' consciousness into the movement, it is subservient to the radical ethno-political agendas and has yet to transform into an independent 'feminist' consciousness able to negotiate with the political power holders in Turkey and/or articulate with the general civil society in Turkey.

ORDINARY WOMEN'S BECOMING POLITICAL

> … [D]isplacement – a particular form of movement – refers to the shift of the corporeal being into a new social space/place. But, as importantly, it refers to the changing expectations and repressions, opportunities and exclusions among those who move, and those who are dislodged from their positions of physical, social, political, economic, and personal security. (Feldman, Geisler and Silberling 2003:8)

Conflict and displacement have actually wrought competing social and political processes for women. The burden of new familial and residential arrangements and social and economic hardship have created new forms of repression for women, but at the same time granted them a certain form of bargaining power within the changing power dynamics at home and in communities. The survival strategies developed by women to deal with the new circumstances and newly emerging power dynamics broaden women's horizons and shape their experiences and identities as well as hopes, expectations and perspectives on future (Meertens 2001). Nida, a displaced woman, says

> There is no way to settle back in the village. Some have gone back. They repaired the road [to the village]. The primary school is reopened. My husband is a bit willing about going back. But I do not want to go back. The current situation is so concerning. Everybody knows that the war is not over. I cannot risk the lives of my children. If nothing improves; this time, I will try to go to Europe and seek refuge with my children. I don't want to raise them in war circumstances. I want them not to live like us. I want them to get education, to live like respected people, not like us (Nida, interview, Diyarbakır, August 2004).

When asked if her husband agrees with her, her answer is "he can join us if he wants, I really do not care about him that much. My children are my primary concern and I won't let my husband stay in my way." Indeed, as women have gained access to pro-Kurdish civil society organizations and observed the conflict-related experiences of the others, they have been exposed to information (mostly misleading since it doesn't inform people about the complications involved) and gained understanding (mostly naïve since people are not totally aware of the functioning of international systems) about the international adventures available to them including asylum in European countries. On the one hand, the availability of international protection mechanisms empower people convincing them of the possibilities of better life chances; on the other hand, as people come to the realization that it is not easy to engage with the international systems (particularly the international refugee system) due to structural obstacles, they further embrace a 'victim' identity unable to change the oppressing circumstances.

One of my female activist interviewees, Munise[119] a mother of three separated

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[119] Munise was not a displaced person. She was affiliated with the pro-Kurdish political party and has been a pro-PKK activist since 1990s. She had been arrested and tortured several times during 1990s. During my stay in Diyarbakır, Munise was detained once due to her participation in a pro-PKK protest. Protestors clashed with the police and several of them were detained including Munise. She was released a day after. When I saw her about a week after her release, she looked somehow disappointed since she 'was not treated badly in detention' (thank to EU pressure on Turkey to maintain a 'zero tolerance to torture' principle in police stations). She was thinking that if she was treated badly in detention, this would be a supporting evidence in her RSD file pending.

from her husband and a fervent pro-PKK activist, had already started the official RSD (Refugee Status Determination) process for political asylum in Germany as she was still residing in Diyarbakır with her children. During my stay in Diyarbakır, I talked to Munise several times and asked her about how everything was progressing with her RSD. Munise, who in our first meeting was enthusiastically convinced that she would be granted political asylum by Germany no matter what, started to lose her faith as first she learnt that her children could not go with her in case she received protection and then she was informed about the abject conditions in asylum centers in Germany, isolated from city centers with refugees' access cut off even from basic service provisions (a news about the inhumane conditions of refugee centers in European countries also appeared in the local pro-Kurdish newspaper *Yerel Gündem* fall 2004).

The impact of the armed conflict on family formations among the conflict-affected Kurds has been substantial. The conflict has also left many female-headed households behind as men have been recruited by the PKK and/or killed or having been 'disappeared' via the Turkish security forces and sometimes the Kurdish Islamist Hezbullah. Here it is also important to note that socio-economic vulnerabilities, poverty and unemployment are coupled with the frequency of families missing male family members, female-headed households, high numbers of street children, and high rates of prostitution in Diyarbakır. (Field Interviews with key informants and the displaced families, 2004; also see TMMOB, 1998; TESEV, 1998; Global IDP, 2003). Although cultural traditions encourage Kurdish families to accommodate the women who lose their husband and their children within the extended household, forced migration, the splintering of extended families and drastic impoverishment have distorted family

structures, loosened up family ties and provided legitimate 'excuses' for the close relatives to abandon the widowed women.

In certain cases, it is the widowed women who prefer to live apart from their relatives and set up their own households with their children. The disruption that conflict and displacement has caused has provided some women with the ability to challenge traditional family arrangements and make their own decisions for themselves and their own children. These processes of losing the 'heads' of the family have encouraged women to take on new roles and to engage in income generation activities, with sometimes coterminous impacts of empowering and burdening. Women's participation in income generating activities is limited however, possibly due to lack of informal employment opportunities in Diyarbakır and/or the social control mechanisms over women that prevent their engagement with cash generating activities. Despite their willingness to be income generators, very few displaced women are involved in those activities.

> My husband was arrested. He was in prison in Istanbul. Our relatives took us to Adana [a southern province] but I could not stay there. It was a foreign place. I came back to Diyarbakır with my children[;] waited for my husband to be released (Şilan, interview Diyarbakır, 2004).

> My husband got murdered [persecutor unknown] in Diyarbakır shortly after we were driven away from our village. His parents and brothers were also in Diyarbakır and we were staying together. They wanted me and my children to continue to stay with them. I knew that nothing would be the same for me in that house. I did not have my husband anymore. They would want to control me and my children. I was scared that they would force my children to quit their school and to work on the street. I left their house. I rented an apartment by myself. Now I go to clean others' houses, my children work on the street. They have to. But they work in shifts and they go to school too. I spend the money they earn for their own expenses, not for those of the relatives (Melek, Diyarbakır, interview 2004).

In cases that men are present in the family, they are very likely to suffer emasculation due to their inability to sustain the family well-being as they used to do. While men prefer to talk about the lack of employment, women prefer to talk about the impact of unemployment on family's survival such as children working on the street, inability to meet basic survival needs, food insecurity, lack of medicine, inability to go to hospital in case children are ill, etc. On one occasion, during my interview with a man who was unable to work due to a chronic illness, his wife intervened telling me about her difficulties in preparing a meal for dinner. "Lunch is ok; I try to prepare something small for the children. But for dinner I would like cook something better." As she started to cry, she got scolded by her husband who responded to her saying "we are people with honor; we should not be telling the others if we are hungry."

Within the changing power configurations between men and women, men might use strategies ranging from resorting to domestic violence against women in order to recoup their previous status in the family to letting women step up and be active in public to make up for what men are not able to provide anymore. In the latter case, forced migrant women undertake major roles as mediators between various organizations, and their families and communities[120]. Those organizations include a wide range of governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that displaced Kurdish women have contacted after they ended up in the cities such as the state's Social Services Administration, schools and hospitals, human rights organizations, women's organizations, migrants' organizations, political parties and pro-Kurdish municipality

[120] Indeed, research suggests that women in poor families, rather than men, are active in Turkey in approaching authorities to apply for social aid, service provisions and/or whatever welfare support is available for their families (see for example Bugra and Keyder 2003).

social service centers. It is again the women who are most willing to approach relevant social and political actors to ask for financial support, medicine, food aid and even employment for their husbands and sons.

Engagement with the local and national organizations, pro-Kurdish political parties[121], state agents and local municipality activities provides the women with social and political awareness on issues ranging from human and women's rights discourses to new laws and amendments in law that directly concern them. Encounters with organized actors in the city equip the women with social relations, up-to-date political and legal information as well as the ability to be involved with those organizations that they see as relevant to their needs. These interactions of the local populations at the civil society level also further contribute to the dissemination and strengthening of Kurdish 'identity'.

Many Kurdish women have become politicized through the vacuum left by their husbands and sons. Upon losing their husbands and sons to the war, women have taken control of the space opened by the absence of men not only in the household, but also in the communal and public arena. They have come to recognize the existence of power dynamics in a variety of social spaces ranging from home and communities to the local and national level. This process, in turn, made women become more articulate in questioning the power differentials in gender, class, ethnicity and citizenship terms.

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[121] Although there have been various political parties with particular agenda on Turkey's 'Kurdish Question', the ones with the strongest local support was the successors of the HEP followed by DEP, HADEP, DEHAP and currently DTP since the parties have been successively annulled by the Constitutional Court. During my fieldwork, DEHAP was controlling the metropolitan and sub-district municipalities in Diyarbakır and several other cities in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey. The party has recently liquidated itself not only because of the numerous criminal cases opened against the party and its members on the grounds of promoting terrorism, but also it has been in the process of transforming itself into a new political initiative (DTP) guided by a group of Kurdish politicians who are themselves former members of previously outlawed DEP, and have been released from their prison sentences recently.

Politicization has become a quest for justice and the settling of accounts with the Turkish state for having been uprooted, human and citizenship rights violations, torture, disappearances and extra-judicial killings that they and/or their loved ones suffered. Not all conflict-affected Kurdish women have turned into political activists, but their highly political experiences have politicized those women. This is a form of political awareness that makes Kurdish women realize that their social, economic, political as well as gender-related vulnerabilities are actually their strengths. A particular form of victimization is associated by the women with their social, economic and political insecurity so that being Kurdish is perceived as the major reason for the displacement, suffering and poverty that they experience.

> What I want from the state is basically nothing. The state is like something evil in my eyes. It made us migrants, left our children hungry… My only wish is to live in security, freedom for Apo [imprisoned leader of the PKK] and an independent Kurdistan.

It is ironically this peculiar victim psychology that grants a form of empowerment to women in their positioning themselves vis a vis the state through rights discourses. Jelin (2005: 197) explains the implications of this victim status under circumstances of state repression, "[b]ased on their position as victims, they can look to repair and correct, demanding that the state assume and recognize responsibility for its past wrongdoings". Leyla, a 42 year-old woman provides the following account as her husband sits next to her listening quietly

> I don't think that someone else other than us could understand how much we suffered… The soldiers burnt down the village, everything we had. They burnt down our lives together with our trust in the state. We *don't want* the state to *help* us. We want what we deserve and what we lost due to the state activities. *We don't want help, we want our rights*. (Emphasis added)

Social, economic and gender-related vulnerabilities indeed legitimize women's demands for justice and rights, justify their search for non-conventional ways of doing things and, to a certain extent, insulate them from violence in the form of police/gendarme detention and surveillance. Zeren, a displaced woman whose husband was killed extra-judicially, states:

> Shortly after we came to Diyarbakır, my husband was taken away [by the JITEM- a special unofficial counter-terrorism team used by the Turkish security forces in southeastern Turkey during the emergency rule period]… I was the only one in the family trying to find out what happened to him. Everybody else was scared and told me that nothing could be done for him. I started going to the JITEM base everyday. I went to them every single day to ask them about my husband's whereabouts. I was not scared… I would take my children with me, what could they do to a woman with little children?... One day, they confessed to me that my husband had been executed and asked me not to go there anymore.

After learning about her husband's execution, Zeren "started to search for someone who could help me [her] seek my [her] rights"

> I went to consult with IHD (Human Rights Foundation) in regard to my husband's murder. They helped me to take my case to the ECHR (European Court for Human Rights). It is going to finalize very soon hopefully… I am a member of Migrants' Association and Human Rights Organization (HRO). I follow their activities. I do not want any money in exchange for my husband's life. I want the Turkish state to be held liable for what it did to us. I want a general amnesty for the imprisoned and the guerillas. I want justice be done (Zeren, 30 year-old, mother of 3, no formal education (illiterate), Interview, Diyarbakır 2004).

Encounters of the Kurdish women with organized Kurdish groups, local and national civil society organizations and internationalized discourses of rights (human, cultural and women) have been distinct from those of their male counterparts. Local and national women NGOs, organized Human Rights groups, migrants' associations, bar associations and pro-Kurdish municipalities, have come up with specific projects and programs specifically aiming to help women deal with the social, economic, psychological and legal problems arising in the aftermath of displacement, while most of

the time perceiving or presenting women as 'victims'. Literacy classes, workshop (handcraft) activities, legal and psychological consultancy are some of the activities undertaken by the local NGOs. Laundry houses, literacy classes and health services of the metropolitan and sub-district municipalities also specifically target migrant women in 'poor' neighborhoods. Domestic violence, honor-killings, prostitution, and women and displacement are some of the specific issues in the agendas of these organized groups.[122]

Women's encounters with those organized groups have in turn shaped their perceptions of their position in society as women, and also as Kurds, as civilians 'victimized' and people 'impoverished' by the Turkish state and the security forces. These interactions between the grassroots and the local and national civil society initiatives further contribute to the disseminating and strengthening of the 'Kurdish identity' and pro-Kurdish politics among the civilians including women. Women can be very vocal in articulating their problems and demands in line with the general political rhetoric of the Kurdish movement and its demands for ethnic(ized) 'rights' and 'democracy'. The right to speak Kurdish, the right to practice Kurdish culture and more radical demands such as the right to have an independent 'Kurdistan' are discursively added to the end of women's statements about expectations for the future.

> We suffer a lot here in Diyarbakır, I feel the pain of seeing my children hungry all the time. Unless we are given our rights, our situation will not improve and the

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[122] Diyarbakır Bar Association had just started a new Project 'Justice for Everyone' in Diyarbakır and neighboring provinces during my field study in the summer of 2004 with support from the European Commission- women has been specified as a sub-group among the others which included 'children', 'tortured', 'forced migrants' 'relatives of the ones killed in extra-judicial murders and disappeared', 'victims of landmines and explosives', 'imprisoned-sentenced and their relatives' (Interview with Cihan Aydin, Lawyer, Diyarbakır Bar Association, Legal Help Bureau, 2004).

> conflict will not end. Our right is independence, this is what we deserve (Ahvelat, interview Diyabakir 2004).
>
> What I demand from the Turkish state is not anything material like I don't want money, I don't want food. I demand a general amnesty for the prisoners and peace… I demand the rights of my people [Kurds]. I want to speak my own language, I want to live in my own country, I want my home (village) back (Berivan, interview, Diyarbakır 2004).

Women voice their demand for 'justice'- compensation for their losses and to settle the problems of 'the past' from the Turkish state including killings, disappearances, torture, displacement etc. in order to reconstruct their lives in a different environment. However, beyond their demand for 'justice', they reevaluate their current situation in regard to their 'rights'- cultural, social, political and human rights as well as the 'democracy' rhetoric to which they have been exposed to as a part of their experiences with the conflict, violence and displacement.

> People talk about the European Union all the time, about democracy and human rights it will bring to us… Then they say that we should go back to our villages. In order for me to go back to the village, I need democracy and human rights in my village. If there will be democracy in my village, then I consider going back to the village. (Sultan, peace mother, interview, Diyarbakır 2004)
>
> [The] Turkish state should pay for the damage caused in the village. Our houses got destroyed, our harvest was burned down, and people got killed in the chaos. We are struggling with hunger here [in the city]… but still I do not want to go back to the village. I want to believe that everything will be better here in Diyarbakır and our situation will improve…if there will be schools, hospitals, roads in my village, if there will be peace and dignity then I may go back permanently (Leyla, interview, Diyarbakır 2004).
>
> DEHAP [pro-Kurdish municipality] works very well. They care about us. The municipality goes to the people; they conduct public forums for us to participate. This is what we need. But there are a lot of things to do, we need shelters for women and elderly, we need anti-drug programs targeting youth, we need anti-prostitution programs to save Kurdish girls and women and we need investment in

> the region. (Zuhal[123], involved in political activism after her husband was arrested, interview Diyarbakır, Novermber 2004)

Any analysis of women's quest for social spaces, justice and rights should not lose sight of the international and national contexts that interact with the very local terrain in which women maneuver. In fact, Kurdish women's demands and expectations are strongly engaged with the state and articulated through internationalized rights discourses, such as human and cultural rights. Whether they search for justice and want to settle accounts with the wrongdoings of the state and security forces during the conflict, or they look for jobs, access to education and health services for themselves or their children; women as social actors articulate with the state as the focal point for demand-making.

WOMEN'S AGENCY TRAPPED IN 'NEO-LIBERAL DISCIPLINING'

Conflict-induced migrant women are not merely concerned with past atrocities, including human rights violations in the form of forced migration, torture, disappearances and extra-judicial killings, but in face of the increasing burden of impoverishment/poverty, social exclusion and inequalities; they also start integrating today's concerns into the rights rhetoric to which they have been accustomed throughout the socio-political processes of conflict and displacement. Two intertwined political processes have developed on the ground; the widening gap between the central state and the Kurdish masses in the region and the increasing state-society alienation and increasing salience of ethnic politics.

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[123] Zuhal was also working for the municipality as a cleaning staff member in a laundary house.

Neo-liberalism as global restructuring and a part of transnational regionalisms, such as European Union integration, has limited the state's governance competency, which rises as a major obstacle in countries like Turkey where notion of citizenship is still under consolidation. At the juncture where processes of the conflict and displacement meet the processes of global neo-liberalism transformation, it is important to disentangle the processes through which Kurdish women find empowerment, agency and voice and the processes through which they get further marginalized and victimized. As Giles and Hyndman say;

> New definitions of citizens as 'special interest groups" or "consumers" have emerged. The rights of citizens and those of global capital are being constantly negotiated at a time when neo-liberal rationality prevails over welfare state models of governance. Women's issues tend to be marginalized within the domestic and feminized sphere of home and family. These issues are artificially separated from more pressing "public" challenges of security and economy (Giles and Hyndman: 304).

This is a relevant observation to make in the context of the Southeastern provinces where 'women' and 'displaced persons' are two specific social categories currently targeted by the state initiatives such as GAP (Southeast Anatolian Project) and UNDP co-sponsored development programs, local municipality projects and civil society activities. Women's disproportionately limited access to the public sphere, jobs, education, health services and their lack of command of Turkish and lack of control over familial relations in their communities have become 'visible' together with the conflict and displacement of the Kurdish communities from rural into the urban centers.

Processes of displacement have made women more 'visible' by their appearances in the city centers as opposed to their 'invisibility' in geographically remote rural communities. From the Turkish literacy classes to psychological consultancy services offered by the local NGOs, from micro-credit programs to workshop activities and

municipality neighborhood social services (such as laundry and bakery houses), the majority of the local services all primarily target women in southeastern provinces such as Diyarbakır. In a symptom therapy manner, the general aim appears to make the local population (especially women) more able to deal with the problems of structural poverty and unemployment and to mitigate the social, economic and domestic burden carried by the poor. In the presence of the systems of underdevelopment, and social, economic and political problems of the region, project-based 'development' initiatives seem to be inadequate for a systematic and long-term change.

It is important to note that migrant women's (Turkish as well as Kurdish for that matter) problems are mainly addressed at the civil society and local government level across Turkey rather than the central social state level. The central government has initiated policy initiative to address issues with poverty and 'street children' since 2002 (see for example Buğra and Keyder 2003 and 2006). Upon the arrest of the leader of the PKK, the lifting of the regional emergency rule concomitantly with the democratization reforms undertaken by the central government created temporary hopes for depoliticization and the ending of the conflict. It was in this environment that the central government reevaluated the displacement issue as a 'social risk' to be reduced through social policy, socio-economic development and reconstruction in the southeast (Aker et.al 2006). However, no concrete policy initiative has been undertaken to specifically address the migrant women's gender specific problems at the social policy level.

Women's vulnerabilities, rather tend to be defined within the discourses of social development (including illiteracy, family planning, and women's and children's health) and 'culture' (honor-killings and domestic violence). Social, economic and political vulnerabilities originating from the contingencies of conflict and political violence such

as conflict-induced economic impoverishment and/or problems with accessing judiciary and legal mechanisms have been marginalized within state circles and national decision-making mechanisms. The presence of ubiquitous pro-PKK sentiments within certain Kurdish feminist circles has further contributed on the side of the state to equating legitimate citizen demands seeking justice for extra judicial killings, disappearances and displacement with the pro-PKK politics. The state's security minded approach towards the pro-Kurdish politics together with the radicalization among the pro-Kurdish circles to the extent of seeing the PKK violence right and legitimate has most injured the ordinary Kurdish civilians.

Political radicalization and increasing resonance of antagonistic perception of the state among the conflict-induced migrant communities go hand in hand with impoverishment and unemployment in the provincial centers of southeastern Turkey. Especially, with the lack of and/or distortion of the traditional social safety nets, women have found themselves in poverty and socio-economic insecurity. Burdens of conflict and displacement have coupled with the declining already limited existence of the state as a social guarantor in the region. Along with the declining capacity of the social state to be the welfare provider for vulnerable social classes, the penetration of neo-liberal policy practices into provincial centers, in the form of local municipality social services and target group programs have brought in peculiar changes into the everyday lives of poor migrant women. While mitigating the burden of poverty, and increasing women's social visibility in the city life, the role of neo-liberal practices in women's gaining a social agency is still dubious. Neo-liberal practices directly and indirectly undermine the state's and citizens' ability to articulate and negotiate with each other by rendering women's social and political agency to identity-based clientalism and/or de-politicized boundaries

of the 'target group' rationality on the one hand, and promoting the ethnicization of impoverishment and unemployment on the other. Both processes in turn weaken the democratic civic citizenship consolidation in southeastern Turkey.

CONCLUSION: IMAGINING DEMOCRATIC SPACES FOR WOMEN

In this chapter, I have discussed the gendered repercussions of changing power dynamics and social and political transformations throughout the conflict years in southeastern Turkey. The main point that I have aimed to make is that women's subjugation as well as liberation/emancipation are heavily embedded within the power relations that interplay at the familial, communal, national and international levels. Radical transformations in social relations and general politicization in society might in fact open spaces of opportunity, voice and dignity for women. (Some) women are able to exploit newly emerging power dynamics at home, in their community as well as in the national and international arena whenever they are able to step outside the traditional forms of subjugation and newly imposed conflict-induced constraints. However, new opportunities for women might come with a high price especially under conflict circumstances. Displacement, violence and loss of the traditional safety nets and family members have made many Kurdish women struggle with the newly emerging systems of oppression, poverty, insecurity and marginalization in city centers. Claims for property damage, employment, education, health services are also instrumental for migrant Kurdish women to socially and politically situate themselves in relation to the state as neglected and less than legitimate citizens of Turkey.

How local interacts with the national as well as international focal points after the conflict can create democratic spaces that might be offering women potential bargaining power to assert themselves within rapidly changing power relations. Rights discourses

developed around human rights, cultural rights and the notion of democracy are especially instrumental for women's gaining social and political awareness. In fact, transnational processes of global restructuring of economic and power relations have reinforced the leverage of human rights discourses in domestic and international politics. This, in turn, grants the socially and politically oppressed groups of citizens a kind of bargaining power to be used against the state, which also in turn promotes the relevance of citizenship (Roberts 2005: 144, Sikkink and Keck 1998). However, rights rhetoric might be most effective at the policy level and unifying at the societal level when it articulates with the focal points in terms of justice and citizenship rather than inherently divisive identity politics.

Ethno-nationalist radicalism asserting ethnicity and culture over social, economic and political vulnerabilities cross-cutting ethnic and religious identities further antagonizes the state-society relations in predominately Kurdish geographies. It also undermines women's ability to develop social, economic and political claim-making independent from rampant and rabid ethno-nationalist agendas. Presence of a receptive social state and well-functioning rule of law especially in areas of conflict would be a counter force against political radicalization and deepening political cleavages resulting from ethnic politics that undermines the consolidation of democracy and citizenship culture.

Organizing by the Kurdish women and/or for the Kurdish women would benefit social alliances and allegiances between the Turkish women and Kurdish women in Turkey. Not only traditionally embedded social problems such as honor-killings, but also conflict-induced subordination of the Kurdish women, their search for peace and justice could be voiced most effectively through solidarity networks between Turkish and

Kurdish women positioned differently in political orientation, class and other social terms. Beber (2004: 268) notes "[c]rosscutting allegiances do not only serve as a means to prevent armed conflict. They also help to maintain just and fair opportunities, as they empower individuals to redefine their positions in society by weighing competing allegiances as they see fit." As contended by Fraser; the notion of *justice,* and as stated by Kalder; civic consciousness rather than ethnic politics could have been crucial to establish much needed allegiances between the organized Turkish and Kurdish women's groups in Turkey. A prudent state structure therefore would facilitate state-society articulation through systematic social, economic and political initiatives grappling with the root causes of inequality, poverty and unemployment as well as the impediments for practicing rights and political, legal and judiciary barriers in doing justice.

The increasing socio-economic burden of neo-liberalism falls on the shoulders of the most vulnerable social classes in the form of poverty and unemployment. This burden feeds ethno-nationalist politics in southeastern Turkey and further endangers state-society articulation and reconciliation between the Turkish state and the conflict-induced migrant groups caught in between the violence of the past and social, economic and political vulnerabilities of the present. When social and political transformations open spaces for negotiation between the state and conflict-affected Kurds, women are more likely to get their voices heard in demand-making and policy implementation as legitimate social actors and citizens. As Turner (2000:36) observes 'a conflict model of democratic citizenship' might emerge out of radical social and political turmoil; "[w]arfare, occupation, and civil wars can often produce unintentionally the modernizing force necessary to erode gender hierarchies, status divisions, and the presence of primordial associations within the public domain".

Democratic spaces can emerge as long as women are empowered in their families and outside to make demands and to participate in decision making processes, and further to establish alliances with each other across social groups and within social groups in class, ethnicity and political orientation terms. Power dynamics in geographies of violence could be changed for democratic consolidation when women are equipped with social and political agency to challenge systems of oppression capitalizing on conflict-induced radical transformations with spaces for change at familial, communal, national and international level.

CHAPTER 6

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THE STATE AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AMONG THE DISPLACED

September 2004

> "I was invited by Isa to his house to have lunch with his mother and siblings. 'My sisters will like you. You are like a good role model for them. I want them to study, like you' he said to me to convince me for the lunch. His father was disappeared by the Turkish security forces in 1992 when Isa was 14 years old and his youngest brother was just a couple of months old, and his family was forced by the Turkish army to leave their village in 1993. Now he lives in one of Diyarbakır's inner city neighborhoods with his mother, three younger sisters and one 12 year-old brother. His sister, Berfin opened the door with hesitation and a concerned look. After Isa introduced me to her, she started smiling and admitted that I looked to her 'like not from [t]here' and she first thought I was an under cover Turkish cop. She told me that once a female cop with civilian clothing went to their home to ask them about Isa's whereabouts. Something had happened and they got suspicious that Isa was involved. 'They very likely knew that there was no adult male in our household other than Isa, so they sent a female cop, as tall as you are, to ask us questions. Isa did not do anything wrong' she said timidly… When I told her that I was a Turk too, she giggled, 'yah! But you are a good one'…
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> After a while we entered the house, we heard children outside shouting the famous pro-PKK[124] slogan 'Biji Serok Apo!, Biji Apo Serok Apo![125]' And then we heard the Turkish security patrols shouting back to the children 'Go to your homes children! don't make us go in there!' Isa checked the street from his balcony and said to me, 'This is children's favorite play, going closer and closer to the security patrols, throwing small stones to them, running back into the neighborhood shouting "Biji Serok Apo!"' He started laughing, 'This is so much fun to watch.'… I asked him what the patrols would usually do as a reaction. He told me that unless anything serious happens, they would do nothing. 'At least not anymore' [he continued] 'before, they would run after the children, get some of them and maybe detain them for a while. Now they just stay calm. They don't even want to step in the neighborhood, afraid that things might get out of their

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[124]Kurdistan Labor's Party (PKK) is the Marxist-Leninist separatist Kurdish organization waging a guerilla war against the elements of the Turkish state and the opposing Kurdish communities. The organization is officially considered as a 'terrorist' organization by many countries around the world including the US and western European countries.

[125] 'Long live leader Apo!, Long live Apo, leader Apo!'. Apo means uncle in Kurdish and is used by the majority of the Kurds to call Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK.

> control. Europe is watching; they can't do anything, especially to young children.' Then, I asked him if he knew the children and if they were from the forced migrant families like that of his. He said, 'all of them!' Unlike Isa, I got concerned not only because there are nothing more than children in Diyarbakır and these kids are socializing 'playing' with armed 'security' forces who are not necessarily feeling responsible for the security of those children, but also because that sympathy for a violent organization and its leader seems like turning into a religion in this geography"[126]

In this chapter, I lay out the major actors that have been concerned with the displacement of Kurds in southeastern Turkey and have recently negotiated over the issue. I am particularly interested in how displacement and the displaced Kurdish population have been perceived, negotiated about and dealt with by different actors including the international community, Turkish state, civil society organizations and local municipal governments. The following discussion is important to disentangle the discourses that 'rights' of and 'risks' posed by the displaced Kurds have been articulated by those actors other than the displaced themselves. At a juncture of international, national and local spaces of politics and policies, I propose that displaced Kurds have turned into 'victims', 'citizens', 'security threats', 'potential refugees', 'client electorate', and/or 'partisans' in their contextually defined position in relation to different actors involved. This chapter is important to be able to conceptualize forced migration as a politically defined process involving actors with various degrees of leverage over negotiations. The discussion in this chapter is important to see how international actors and processes are involved in an internal conflict, therefore in turn to conceptualize the recent nature of the Kurdish Question in relation to international conjecture and international developments.

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[126] Excerpts from field notes, Fall 2004, Diyarbakır/Turkey

The reason that displacement has attracted international attention is that the displaced population is perceived by the international actors in terms of the 'risks' associated with governability of displaced Kurds within the discourses of 'reconstruction' and 'development' and 'rights' associated with the international human rights regime. International involvement using the requisites of the international rights of internally displaced people drawing upon international human rights discourses together with the pressure coming from the European Court for Human Rights has changed the Turkish state attitude towards displaced Kurds.

An emphasis has been put on social problems and legal demands of displaced masses across the country with attempts to formulate social policy initiatives to meet the basic needs of displaced Kurds and encourage them to return with a promise of socio-economic reconstruction in their places of origin. The government initiatives, indeed, have introduced a seemingly promising dynamic through which articulation between the poor displaced Kurdish communities and the central government is to develop in terms of social and legal rights rather than exclusion and disregard. On the other hand, displaced Kurds' direct encounter with organized actors happens at a very local level. Local governments and political party organizations on the ground (i.e. pro-Kurdish and pro-Islamist political parties); capitalize on socio-economic vulnerabilities of local constituents trying to establish new forms of clientelistic relations in exchange for social services and provisions, in face of the lack of effective social state. My specific focus on the southeastern provincial center-Diyarbakır reveals that pro-Kurdish actors facilitate the creation of an *ethnicized* discourse of poverty and unemployment in Diyarbakır- the city that they consider as the capital city of the Kurdish struggle.

In this chapter, I further illustrate that politicization among displaced Kurds has the potential to turn into violent protest activities in southeastern Turkey with a manifestation of the radical face of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist sentiments among the grassroots, particularly the young generation men and women. I further point out the importance of the 'urban space' in turning politicization and antagonism among the grassroots into mobilization and activism. The very local domain of Diyarbakır is quite receptive to the changes at the national and international level, particularly the sporadically changing attitude of the pro-Islamist central government towards the *Kurdish Question*, and developments with Turkey's European Union accession process and interests of the EU actors in Turkey's southeastern region.

This chapter is important to see that local contention turns into activism under the conjunction where national and international changes meet local and regional developments. Urban activism in that respect is much more limited and weaker in western city centers despite the fact that western city centers also received substantial amount of conflict-induced Kurdish migration during 1990s. Peculiar local dynamics as I discuss in this chapter are important in instigating and organizing mobilization in southeastern city centers. 2006 violent urban rampage that started in Diyarbakır and spread to the neighboring city centers in the southeast is an example in point. Mass urban activism in southeastern Turkey has indeed recently become a *regular* manifestation of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist contention in southeastern Turkey. Preceding discussion in the chapter provides a picture to understand the root causes and demands of the violent urban street battles of 2006 as well as the incentives of the participants to join. I explain that the pro-Kurdish movement at the elite level and episodic events carried out at grassroots such as urban protest actions fail to initiate a collective action for justice and

peace beyond their identity-based ethno-nationalist circles[127] using the language of justice, rule of law, welfare, social democracy and social equity.[128].

INTERNATIONAL ACTORS, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE SOCIAL STATE

In this section, I show that socio-economic insecurities of displaced Kurdish population carry potential social and political risks for different power actors. Those 'risks' are defined in different terms by different actors, and dealt with different political means. The international community-- including the UN and EU as well as the ECtHR[129]-- defines the 'risks' in terms of the discourses of socio-economic underdevelopment in southeastern Turkey and governance of displaced population for international and regional stability. Operationalizing the discourses of rights including international human rights and international IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) rights, international community pragmatically balances (and sometimes covers) their concerns about potential 'threats/risks' that uprooted Kurdish communities might pose for international security in general and European countries in particular. The recent Turkish state attitude towards the displaced population in terms of developing policy initiatives to accommodate the poorest sectors of displaced in urban centers in fact pleases the international community, who is interested in overturning the problem as an international concern and reducing it to a domestic issue.

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[127] As I explained in chapters 4 and 5, the language of peace in the current pro-Kurdish movement is contained within a language of war glorifying the PKK and justifying the PKK violence.

[128] Instead, pro-Kurdish movement –now its ideology is ubiquitous among forced migrant grassroots- has been so far crippled by the futile language of culture, language and identity staunchly committed to the violent PKK ideology.

[129] ECHR is established under the structure of the Council of Europe, which is an independent body from the EU within the European system. Turkey, although is not a member of the EU is one of the signatory states to the Council of Europe. Check the websites www.coe.int and www.europa.eu

The state construes the 'risks' associated with the displacement issue in terms of displaced population's becoming more 'visible' to the international community as they get more marginalized and silenced in the domestic arena. Recently, the central government is willing to address the displacement issue and negotiate the policy initiatives with the international community for three main reasons 1) to reduce the 'social risks' associated with irregular/informal housing, poverty, street children and crime in urban centers by treating the displaced population in terms of social citizenship and/or encouraging them to return back homes 2) to manage the growing international pressure on Turkey that requires the Turkish state to deal with the displacement issue in compliance with the international guiding principles on 'IDPs' drawing upon rights, reconstruction and development concerns in conflict areas; 3) to overturn the problem as an international concern and invalidate the legal cases against the Turkish state at the ECtHR. Lack of articulation between the central government and the conflict-induced migrant Kurds has the risk of prioritizing the politically defined concerns over local needs, demands and interests. However, what has emerged as a by-product of the international negotiation with the central government to accommodate the displaced population especially in city centers is the government predisposition to evaluate the consequences of displacement such as poverty in terms of social citizenship.

Along the way throughout negotiations between the international actors and the central Turkish government since 2002, national civil society organizations have been left out of the decision-making processes to a large extent. This is partially associated with the general weak position of the civil society actors in Turkish politics; and partially a consequence of the state's endeavor to dominate the negotiation process by leaving out any conflicting voice that might have come out within pro-Kurdish civil society.

International Actors and International Rights Discourses

Internal population displacement arises as an issue of international concern not only because it falls under the international humanitarian and human rights law[130] but also because it might spill over national borders and turn into an international security concern (see for example Hyndman 2000, Dubernet, 2001 and Mooney, 2002). International refugee regime particularly after the Cold War has developed with such a concern of mass human flights towards European countries. With growing number of people displaced in late 1980s, there emerged systematic international concerns leading to changes in the ways that the international regime *governs* displaced populations.

In the year 1992, a Special Representative on 'Internal Displacement', Francis Deng, was for the first time nominated by the UN Secretary General, who produced the "Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" drawing upon international refugee, human rights and humanitarian law. Together with specific interest on 'internally displaced persons', international community including UN has tended to *control* the displaced populations *within* the borders of the nation-states creating safe havens in places like Northern Iraq in 1991 (Operation Provide Comfort) and Bosnia in 1993. Displacement governance policies in turn prevented border crossings and boosted the number of internally displaced people in the world in 1990s (for a general discussion see for example Harrell-Bond 1996 and Hyndman 2000, for a discussion on the Kurdish refugees in Iraq see Adelman 1992). The new era of increasing intra-state violence across the world in 1990s has also wrought new problems of economic underdevelopment,

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[130] Indeed, too much international involvement with conflict-induced population displacement increased the salience of international human rights discourses, as international actions (intrusion of national sovereignty) have been justified by human rights discourses.

social marginalization/exclusion as well as new national and international projections to tackle these problems including economic and social reconstruction and development in conflict areas/geographies. International involvement with the internally displaced populations has increased enormously in contradiction to the original notion of sovereignty. Martin (2002:37) notes;

> The changing context for humanitarian action also affects the roles and responsibilities of international organizations with regard to forced migrations. Formerly, most responsibility for handling forced migration crises went to UNHCR, which mobilized resources from sister agencies. Today, new sets of actors drawn from security, military, human rights, and development communities have growing involvement, particularly in situations involving internal displacement. [emphasis added]

The Turkish case of the displacement of Kurds however, was an exception for international involvement until the end of 1990s. Within the interested international community, Turkey was called 'a tough nut to crack' for international actors concerned with the situation of displaced Kurds (Cohen 1999). The UN, its sub-units and the humanitarian agencies had been ineffective in their attempts to pressure the Turkish state to address the displacement of Kurds in Southeastern Turkey (see Cohen 1999 and Norwegian Refugee Council, 2004)[131]. UNHCR, UNDP and the other UN subagencies as well as international humanitarian organizations were not (still are not, except for limited UN collaboration with the central state after 1999) allowed to work with

[131] Selectivity in international intervention and involvement, therefore, indicates the importance of power relations in the international arena versus the concerns for national sovereignties. Hence, the traditional meaning of sovereignty in the international law should be questioned in any attempt to understand the international involvement in humanitarian situations. As Krasner (1999) points out, it may not be the concerns with sovereignty, but power dynamics that determine intervention politics. Also see Andreas Feldmann (2002) for a discussion of selectivity in international responses to internal displacement situations in three different Latin American countries, Peru, Guatemala and Colombia.

displaced communities in Turkey[132]. Parallel to Krasner's (1999) proposition, diplomatic power that Turkey had in international arena gave her the leverage to prevent international intrusion into her national sovereignty while international actors including international humanitarian organizations do not struggle a lot to cross national borders of many non-western countries around the world notifying international human rights violations and stipulation of humanitarian assistance.

Despite Turkey's resistance against international involvement with the issue of conflict-induced mass population displacement in 1990s, *Kurdish Question* could not escape becoming an international issue as masses of Turkish Kurds started spilling over the Turkish borders towards Europe and towards Northern Iraq en mass, which was an indication of state's failure (and/or systematic policy) (not) to protect and accommodate its own conflict-affected civilian population. Human rights organizations such as HRW (Human Rights Watch) and AI (Amnesty International) became the most diligent actors trying to point out the human rights violations involved in displacement process and calling for the Turkish state to facilitate return. A tension has also emerged between the Turkish state and international community including EU and UN. Relatively less influential EU institutions such as the EU Parliament periodically called attention to the

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[132] Part of the explanation for this may be the Turkish state's commitment to keep its 'Kurdish Question' insulated from international intervention. However, operations of international organizations (and even national NGOs) have always been strictly limited and under state control in Turkey. Even during the 1999 earthquakes that officially claimed the lives of more than 17,000 people and displaced a much greater number of people in western Turkey, involvement of national and international NGOs including the humanitarian aid organizations was strictly prevented (Jalali 2002). So it would be a grave mistake to associate a direct ethno-political connotation to the Turkish state's resistance to international involvement in the situation of displaced Kurds. Majority of the academic and non-governmental policy research has attributed ethnic connotations to the Turkish state's resistance to international involvement in the situation of displaced Kurds and in turn contributed to what I call 'ethnicization' of the perception of processes of the armed conflict and population displacement. Ethnic connotations discursively attributed to certain processes of the armed conflict distract attention away from broader structural problematiques embedded into the state system in Turkey.

instability in the region and village evacuations by the Turkish security forces. More powerful EU units including the EU commission and the EU council however remained cautiously reluctant to bring the issue into the negotiation agenda (Personal email correspondence with Sugden of HRW-Human Rights Watch; also see Sugden 2004).

As a unity aiming to stabilize its immediate periphery, European Union was, during the 1990s primarily concerned with the disrupting impact of the 'Kurdish question' on its own geography through uncontrolled migrations. In a parallel vein, EU approach towards the internally displaced Kurds in Turkey—except less than systematic declarations of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe concerned with human rights violations-- was closely associated with the concerns over instability and disoriented human mobility in Southeastern Turkey[133]. When uprooted Kurdish refuges from Turkey (and also Northern Iraq following Saddam Hussein's attacks on Iraqi Kurds) started accumulating at the doors of the West European countries in mid 1990s; Europe saw them as a social, economic and political *threat* to be rebuked (see for example, Bloch and Levy (1999); Hyndman (2000); Joly (2002); Ugur (1995). Going further, European countries associated the uncontrolled refugee flows to Europe from Asia via Turkey with the political instability in the Middle East including Turkey's southeast (Council of Europe (COE), 2002; European Parliament (EP), 2003; Commission of the European Communities, 2002).

EUROPE BLAMES TURKEY FOR REFUGEE CRISIS

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[133] As a local director of a development NGO operating in the major provincials in the eastern Turkey reported in an interview that "through the funds that the European countries channel to Turkish development agencies, they aim to keep the unstable Kurdish population of Turkey in their original place of residence by increasing their living standards and encouraging socio-economic development in the region; therefore, they aim to prevent the uprooted Kurdish population- [not only the displaced but also rural-urban economic migrants]- from being migrants in the European countries" (Interview: 17/8/2004; TKV-Turkish Development Foundation-Diyarbakır).

> In a recommendatory decision regarding the flow of Asian and Far East refugees through Turkey to Europe, the European Parliament said that the refugees could be stopped only when a political solution brought an end to clashes in Northern Iraq and instability in southeastern Turkey. The European Parliament urged the EU to begin international initiatives for finding a political solution to the growing refugee problem (Hürriyet, 1998 in Turkish Press Review).

Since 1990s, 'Kurdish Question'--as it has been mainly equated by the EU system and actors with socio-economic underdeveloped, inter-regional disparities and human rights violations in Turkey-- has become an increasingly essential bargaining power on the side of the European countries in their attempts to put further barriers along Turkey's alleged 'accession' process to the Union. The Kurdish card has been persistently used to keep the 'Turkish allies' out of the Union by reiterating that Turkey suffers from the deficiencies of its democracy and house a socio-politically unstable, economically underdeveloped Southeastern region. Rather than an engagement with human rights violations, population displacement and/or finding a 'political solution' to reconcile the PKK problem, all EU institutions and countries some way or another have displayed a pragmatic, security minded approach towards Turkey's *Kurdish Question* including the displacement problem.

EU has recently integrated the displacement issue into its recommendations in such a negligent way that acutely disappointed the politicized Kurdish Diaspora in Europe (EU-Turkey Civic Comission 2005). In a 2004 accession report the issue was worded very briefly as part of the following policy recommendation; "[t]he normalisation of the situation in the South-east should be pursued through the return of displaced persons, a strategy for socio-economic development and the establishment of conditions for the full enjoyment of rights and freedoms by the Kurds" (European Commission,

2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, COM (2004) 656 final, 6 October: 55)

The arrest of the PKK leader and so-called 'success' against the organization, subsequent lifting of the emergency rule in the southeast and the official starting of the membership negotiations with EU in 1999 inscribed a turning point in the Turkish state attitude towards international involvement in the displacement issue. However, more than anything, it was the increasing financial burden of the ECtHR cases and the fear of potential future cases that convinced the Turkish government to settle the issue with the corresponding international community.[134] Displaced population who was a population *victim*ized by the Turkish state in the eye of the international organizations with human rights agendas therefore, would have been embraced by the state as '*citizens*' to be taken care of.

By agreeing to collaborate with the international actors, Turkish government actually attempted to take control of the issue, which ironically enabled the government to evade international pressure and human rights violation accusations. Accordingly, starting from the year 2001, by inviting the Special Representative, Francis Deng, the Turkish state has expressed its willingness to negotiate with UN over how to accommodate the 'internally displaced persons' in Turkey with necessary legal arrangements and a social policy. The recent cooperation between the state and UN might be a first step in developing social and economic policies targeting urban as well as rural poverty and unemployment within a broader perspective that integrates the political situation in Southeastern Turkey. As I explain further in detail below, international

[134] Interview with TOHAV

involvement with displaced population in Turkey has recently encouraged the central government to embrace the vulnerable segments of the displaced population with an understanding of social citizenship and justice. Dynamics of this collaboration and which groups are destined to be excluded from the social development policies are yet to be seen.

Civil Society and Representation of the Displaced

Involvement of national civil society organizations with displacement and their effectiveness in negotiations between the international community and the Turkish government have been limited, fragmented and controversial for various reasons. During 1990s, displacement entered the immediate agenda of several human rights organizations in Turkey including the Human Rights Foundation (IHD, NGO with pro-Kurdish overtones), the Foundation of the Oppressed (Mazlum-Der, NGO with pro-Islamist overtones) and the Foundation for Society and Legal Studies (TOHAV, NGO with pro-Kurdish overtones). These organizations prepared regular reports and called attention to the human rights violations involved in displacement process including the torture, detention, extrajudicial killings and disappearance cases that many displaced Kurds and their family members suffered during displacement. IHD with its professional cadre was particularly well-equipped and effective in organizing many displaced villagers and carrying their cases to the ECtHR[135].

Other than human rights-oriented organizations run by professional staff (i.e. lawyers), there was only one migrants' organization run by pro-Kurdish activists with a specific focus on displaced Kurds, (Im)migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and

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[135] Interviews with Diyarbakır Bar Association, Göç-Der and TOHAV

Culture (Göç-Der). During 1990s, Göç-Der offices were closed down several times due to the organization's close affinity with and sympathy for the PKK. Despite interferences, the organization conducted various studies on forced migrant communities including the first wide-ranging survey in several western, southern and southeastern provinces (Göç-Der 1999). It has, however, never managed to be treated as a side by the central governments and its policy recommendations have never been taken seriously (Interview with Göç-Der).

Though, Göç-Der together with the other human-rights organizations became effective in inviting international attention on displacement of Kurds in Turkey; aside a few survey and research studies, the organization has never managed to be a grassroots organization and/or organize the grassroots for demand-making (explained by the director of the organization as a self-critique[136]). Many displaced Kurds' affiliation with the organization has remained as a piece of membership contract paper signed in their first and likely to be the last encounter with the organization. This last point was particularly evident in the case of Diyarbakır as many displaced in interviews indicated that they had been much more in contact with the IHD rather than Göç-Der. IHD with its much more professional team and effectiveness in carrying cases to the national courts as well as to the ECtHR had much more credit in the eyes of the displaced migrants than Göç-Der Diyarbakır office that was not able to provide any concrete legal and/or material assistance to the displaced[137].

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[136] Interview with Göç-Der.

[137] My short visit to the province of Van provided me with a slightly different picture regarding the Göç-Der's relationship with the local people. Together with a predominately forced migrant-populated district under the control of the pro-Kurdish DEHAP[137], Göç-Der Van office was about to initiate 3 different EC

Nationwide civil society organizations treated the displacement issue within the boundaries of human rights discourse and to some extent within the context of citizenship rights violations. However, the anti-state stance of the organizations concerned with the displaced Kurdish population has hindered their legitimacy in the eye of the elements of the state and rendered any communication impossible. Civil society organizations were also unable to frame the issue in such that displacement would be seen as part of a larger picture of political violence with its implications in terms of rule of law, social justice and political corruption concerning not only Kurds but also everybody else in Turkey.

To the general Turkish public, the issue remained so marginal and distant despite the fact that its consequences have been ubiquitous all around Turkey in the form of urban poverty, street children, irregular urbanization, gettoization and crime. A meaningful articulation between the state and national civil society organizations in terms of the issues of citizenship, rule of law, social reconciliation of political violence and/or distributive justice for conflict affected masses has never been realized. The state and the civil society organizations have continued to be antagonistic towards each other rather than collaborative or reconciliatory.

When the central government started communicating with UN in addressing the situation of the displaced citizens and formulating policy initiatives to tackle their needs in 2002; above mentioned civil society organizations have been left out of the picture. The government discourse has dominated the international collaboration as even the UN-

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sponsored projects including a health center and a carpet and tricotage fabric workshop projects targeting the migrant women and youth.

Ankara office has had to conform to the sensitivities and priorities of the state[138]. However, a newly founded civil society organization- TESEV (Economic and Social Studies Foundation of Turkey) has recently entered the picture as *the* civil society actor that the central government and international actors such as UN and EU prefer to communicate with regard to the issue (Ayata and Yükseker 2006).

Although certain elements of the state including the bureaucratic circles and the Turkish army are in tension with the TESEV due to the financial and supposedly ideological ties of the organization with the Soros Foundation[139], TESEV with its liberal (economy), pro-EU stance is in amity with the current pro-Islamist government that pursues aggressive economic liberalization[140] and is ironically pro-western. With TESEV dominating the 'civil society', Pro-Kurdish civil society organizations such as IHD and Göç-Der have been further excluded from negotiations at the national and international level (for a policy oriented study, see for example Ayata and Yükseker 2006).

The Welfare State and Displacement

The first serious policy initiative concerned with the displaced Kurdish population was taken by the state in 1998. A "Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project" (RVRP)

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[138] One important implication of this has been the adoption of a language diluting the state responsibility for village evacuations and putting the emphasis on 'terror' in justifying the state actions during the course of the armed conflict. Another sensitivity of the state has been to carry on policy programmes without a reference to the 'ethnic' dimension of the issue. Therefore, in none of the policy documentations and legislations has there been a reference to the ethnicity of the citizens displaced (see for example Ayata and Yukseker 2006 Birikim).

[139] TESEV is considered subservient to the neo-liberal interests and its social, economic and political recommendations are perceived as undermining rather than strengthening the legitimacy of the institutions protecting democracy in Turkey including the state bureaucracy, judiciary and the army- staunch defenders of laicism/secularism in the country.

[140] Including rapid privatization, pro-market economic orientation and a full compliance with the IMF (see for example Öniş 2000).

was initiated by the government. Similar to a previous "Return to Village" project in 1994; this project particularly targeted the southeastern region and its displaced population once the intensity of the armed conflict reduced drastically in 1998. In 1999 and 2000 major state actions including an "Action Plan for the Eastern and Southeastern Regions" were taken to broaden the scope of the RVRP to integrate social and economic development strategies to be implemented in the eastern and southeastern Turkey.[141] The state was diligent to grapple with the displacement issue as part of the initiatives to 'normalize' the situation in the southeastern region after the PKK was repressed to a large extent. The lifting of the emergency situation regime was accordingly accelerated at the eve of the EU negotiations of 1999.

In the mean time, accumulating financial compensations to be paid to the displaced villagers for the cases lost at the ECtHR has turned the displaced Kurds a financial burden for the central government towards the end of 1990s. The ECtHR cases lost to the displaced villagers also proved that Turkey's politically antagonistic group of suspicious citizens (who would later on be called by the Turkish army 'so-called' citizens[142] in 2005) were taken seriously by the international community and given leverage to the detriment of the Turkish government in the presence of evidence that actions of Turkish security forces against civilians could not be justified under international law (see for example ECtHR-case of Akdivar and others v. Turkey- 1996).

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[141] Ayata and Yukseker (2005: 22) notes "The content of the "Action Plan" was never made public. Reportedly, the 107-item plan had 47 clauses related to economy, 30 about public administration, 14 on education, 13 on health and 3 miscellaneous items (R. Kazim Yucelen, TBMM Tutanak Dergisi 74 (Donem 21), November 1 2001; available from http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanakdonem21/yil4/bas/b015m.htm)"

[142] Although, displaced Kurds had been treated as second class citizens since the moment they were uprooted, this label of 'so-called citizens' was not used in official discourse until the year 2005 when Kurds with contention towards the state were called 'so-called' citizens in a statement given by military

In 2002, the central government started to communicate with UN/UNDP over developing a socio-economic policy program to tackle with the consequences of population displacement including how to return the displaced back to their rural settings[143]. The "Law on Compensation for Losses Resulting from Terrorism and the Fight against Terrorism" was enacted by the Parliament in July 2004 to pay compensation to the conflict-affected citizens for the state-caused destruction during the course of the conflict.

The displaced communities who were previously treated as accomplice of the terrorist forces came to the government attention as 'citizens'[144]. Not surprisingly, the implementation process of the law has so far indicated that the state is still inclined to differentiate between the displaced Kurds within a scale including the displaced who are the least deserving of the compensation—for example families of the PKK members on the one end and the ones most deserving— for example previous and/or current village guards on the other end[145] (see for example Dilek Kurban 2006 2007 for a legal policy analysis). However, this law is still an important step in such that for the first time, the central government did not fail to articulate displacement and related material damage within the terms of *rights* and the state responsibility towards *citizens*.

Starting from 1998, the *Kurdish Question* came to dominate the state agenda again as a socio-economic development problem, so did the displacement issue. The

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authorities after two Kurdish children from migrant families in the southern city of Mersin put fire on a Turkish Flag on May 2005 during the Newroz Spring festival.

[143] Interview with a representative from UNDP, Poverty Reduction Program, January, 5, 2004, also see www.undp.org/tr/

[144] There is no reference to ethnicity (i.e. Kurdish) in any official document/report/legislation.

[145] During the interviews I conducted with the displaced migrants, many interviewees indicated that the law was not enough to compensate neither for the material nor non-material costs of displacement. While many displaced families had made and/or were planning to make an application to benefit from the Law, they expressed frustration and anger for that has been too late for them to consider the law as a meaningful act of social reconciliation.

locus of the state discourse changed from an attention on 'terror'-temporarily believed to be over by the state circles- to an engagement with 'socio-economic development' in southeastern and eastern Turkey. Growing ethnicized social tension in city centers and growing urban problems associated with displacement have become further triggering factors for the central government to encourage return. In August 2005, the government formulated a framework document for policy titled "Measures on the Issue of IDPs and the Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project in Turkey" (see for example Aker et.al 2006). Although return is not considered as a permanent option for the majority of displaced Kurds, even the ones with least incentive to return demand to (re)establish previous socio-economic survival mechanisms through rural-urban connections. Therefore, return is a pragmatic means of social risk reduction in the urban centers on the side of the central government, and a demand to access homeland and regain the socio-economic survival nets in the rural on the side of the displaced masses.

The state actually avoided any actions and discourses that might have led to politicization of the displacement issue. Accordingly, new state initiatives have constructed the issue as a social justice problem ('the law on compensation for losses resulting from terrorism') and a concern with development and reconstruction ('return and rehabilitation' policy). Indeed, recent government initiatives addressing the situation of displaced citizens aim to depoliticize the displacement issue in the international arena, and develop a new form of articulation with the displaced population in terms of social rights and an emphasis on return. Therefore, international actors such as ECtHR which had been unwelcome mediators between the Turkish state and the displaced communities operationalizing the international human rights law have been left out and an officially

created discourse of displacement started to dominate politics and policies regarding the displaced population in Turkey.

Another important development happened with the initiation of a large-scale survey undertaken by a state university in Ankara, titled "Study on Migration and the Displaced Population in Turkey[146]" in December 2004. Although it is at this point not clear what type of policy initiatives will follow the results of this state-initiated field study, the central government seems to be willing to treat the displaced population as part of the general urban poor population by facilitating their access to available welfare provisions. The results of the state Study might further invoke a necessity to design specific policy programmes to tackle with the needs and demands of the displaced population. A policy focus on displaced migrant communities in urban centers; however, would provide insights for evaluating urban poverty under a different light. Changing nature of urban poverty and emergence of 'new poverty' –as cited by Buğra and Keyder 2003, 2006 and I discuss in previous chapter--in western and eastern city centers since 1980s have been closely interrelated with the armed conflict and its socio-economic impact spilling across the conflict territories.

There are however, several complications in formulating social policy specifically targeting conflict-induced migrants in the city centers; including 1) the inability of the social state to come up with any kind of social policy initiative for poverty reduction due to limitations of neo-liberal restructuring imposed upon it, including the IMF restrictions on the budget transfers to the social sector 2) the difficulty to distinguish between forced migrants and economic migrants sharing the same urban destitution and possible

implications of doing this, such as creation of social tension between different migrant groups in the cities and 3) the embeddedness of social and economic urban problems into broader political trajectories that are not possible to deal with especially without public investment, systematic redistribution strategies and employment creation that are beyond the logic of social policy.

GEO-POLITICS OF SOUTHEASTERN TURKEY:
EU ENTERS POLITICS OF URBAN SPACE

In this section, I provide a geo-political picture of the post-1999 era in southeastern Turkey in order to clarify the context in which the displaced communities currently live. In 1990s, the political violence in Southeastern Turkey reached its highest level. Those years were the years that the number of displaced people and extra-judicial killings by the Turkish security peaked (Global IDP, HRW reports). PKK's guerialla war started losing ground towards the end of the 1990s. One major reason for that was the depopulation of the rural areas that provided human and logistic support for the organization since the mid 1980s. (Bozarslan ve Gurbey, reference) It is important to distinguish the post-1999 era from the pre-1999 conflict. The latter refers to the armed conflict era with emergency rule across the southeast. The former refers to substantial decline in the intensity of the armed conflict after the arrest of the PKK leader, the lifting of the emergency rule in the region and the start of the membership negotiations between the EU and Turkey.

The intensity of the armed conflict between the Turkish security forces and the Kurdish insurgent organization decreased substantially in 1999 after the arrest of the head

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[146] The survey has just been finalized and a report regarding the basic findings was released on December

of the PKK. The same year, the PKK declared a ceasefire, which lasted until 2004. Between 1999 and 2002, emergency rule law (martial law) in the region was gradually lifted. Diyarbakır, where the fieldwork data was collected, was one of the last two provinces to have the rule of emergency lifted in the year 2002. Together with the EU-sponsored democratization reforms at the political level, there emerged an environment of relative stability and security in the urban centers in Southeastern Turkey.

Civic activism in Southeastern Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s was highly politicized and concerned with Turkish state violence and repression in the region. The influence of the PKK and its ideology was dominant in local public debate and in the recurrently politicized civil society (see also, Gambetti, 2005). The easing of the armed conflict after 1999 with the arrest of Öcalan, the PKK ceasefire and the gradual lifting of the emergency rule opened a new civic space in the region especially in the provincial centers such as Diyarbakır. This newly emerging space, misleadingly seemed to have a potential for 'different subject positions and political movements …be rearticulated, in order to create new hegemonic configurations of power that might open up trajectories for negotiation [in Southeastern Turkey]. (Öktem (2005: 241)"[147] The upcoming developments however, would bring new socio-political tension and different forms of

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2006.

[147] It is important to note that the PKK ended the ceasefire in June 2004 when I was in the field in Diyarbakır. Currently, the fighting between the Turkish security forces and the PKK continues in certain rural areas in southeastern Turkey, though the intensity of the fighting is less than before and it's geographically limited. PKK has also engaged in hit and run attacks against Turkish security points in several Southeastern provincial centers since 2004, several of them happened during my stay in Diyarbakır in the second half of 2004. There have also been declarations of the PKK cadres being published in pro-PKK media, regarding the change in their guerilla war strategies, which they plan to move to urban centers and metropolitan areas in Western Turkey.

violence to the southeastern urban centers now predominately populated by the forced migrant communities.

The post-1999 period had the potential of peacefully transforming the Kurdish movement and its demands under the newly emerging power configurations that also involve international and regional actors such as the UN and European Union. Interestingly, there is still substantial military surveillance in southeastern Turkey in political, social, economic and cultural realms alongside political immunity discursively granted by the European Union's leverage in the Turkish domestic arena through its demands for democratization reforms and zero-tolerance to human rights violations policies. The nature of the political immunity enjoyed in the region is indeed conducive to demand-making and 'making the voices heard', and even the poorest migrants living in precarious periphery neighborhoods in the cities like Diyarbakır and Van have the sense of this political space immune to the state oppression as I discuss later in detail. In this respect, geography as a regional concept and also as an urban space presents 'opportunities and constraints' for organization and claim-making (Tilly 2003). American journalist Stephen Kinzer notes after his visit to southeastern Turkey in 2005:

> These talks [Turkey's EU negotiation] could last for a decade or more, and the final outcome is far from guaranteed. Some European leaders, including Angela Merkel, the new German chancellor, and the French interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, oppose Turkish membership. A host of issues, from terrorism in Europe to the status of Cyprus, could erupt to block Turkey. Yet in the Kurdish region, people are behaving as if they are already under Europe's protection. (Kinzer, 2005)

In the summer of 2004, then Secretary of the European Union responsible for enlargement, Günter Verheugen, paid a visit to Diyarbakır, where he met the mayor of the provincial municipality (Pro-Kurdish Party), representatives of local civil society organizations and visited a partially returned village that was previously evacuated by the

Turkish security forces for 'security reasons'. Internationalization of Turkey's Kurdish question together with the country's entire internal affairs has contributed to the political space available for the contentious pro-Kurdish actors to put themselves to the fore in a quest to communicate with mainstream Turkish politics via international channels including the EU system, ECHR as well as the use of internationalized rights discourses. Diyarbakır, for example has gained (unofficial) recognition from the international community, European states and the EU. Rapprochement between the EU and the organized pro-Kurdish actors has not facilitated any negotiation between the Turkish state and the Kurds, which in fact caused further antagonism and suspicion on the side of the state and the pro-Islamist central government towards the pro-Kurdish actors.

The EU process has also not been totally satisfying for the organized pro-Kurdish actors in the southeast or for the Kurdish European Diaspora. The EU that was once a safe-haven for the PKK organization, had already started to express its resentment over continuing organic ties between legally operating pro-Kurdish political and civil circles, and the PKK by the end of 1990s. European countries stepped back in their willingness to further support the PKK when the violently militant face of the radical Kurdish nationalists and the criminal activities in which they got involved mushroomed across Europe especially in the urban centers of Germany (Eccarius-Kelly, 2000). Among the organized Kurds, the discontent with the EU overtures over Turkey in regard to the situation of the socio-politically excluded Kurds has increased steadily especially during 2004 and 2005. In its 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession, the EU noted the premises of its proposed 'political solution' for Turkey's Kurdish question

one more time in a vaguely worded brief statement[148]. The European Union, which was considered as the most imperative political opportunity for the pro-Kurdish politics has turned into a disappointment as the Union's pragmatic use of the 'Kurdish card' against Turkey is now more apparent than ever.[149]

International developments have also found their resonance on the ground with disappointment among these local Kurds as their confidence in the EU as a leverage point against the state started fading away. Local population in the Southeast has been restless after 1999 with immediate expectations in terms of peace, cultural rights and social problems such as poverty and unemployment as high as 60% in Diyarbakır[150]. Provinces such as Diyarbakır, Batman, Hakkari, Şırnak and Tunceli have remained as the castles of the pro-Kurdish political parties in the 2004 local elections with a significant portion of their population highly politicized PKK sympathizers. In other southeastern provinces such as Van, Mardin and Siirt, pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) took over municipal control with its appeal to the poorest segments of the population with premises of welfare and justice. There is still however a politically agitated, mobilized pro-PKK population in Van, Mardin and Siirt, which makes itself visible in guerilla

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[148] 'The normalisation of the situation in the South-east should be pursued through the return of displaced persons, a strategy for socio-economic development and the establishment of conditions for the full enjoyment of rights and freedoms by the Kurds' European Commission, 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, COM (2004) 656 final, 6 October: 55

[149] In a 2005 international conference on 'The EU, Turkey and the Kurds', pro-Kurdish groups organized in Europe stated their resentment over 'the EU's failure to address the situation of the Kurds in any kind of substantive or coherent manner,' noting the 'the highly negative potential implications of this scenario for the Kurds, other citizens of Turkey and the EU.' EU-Turkey Civic Commission, The EU, Turkey and the Kurds. Second International Conference, (Brussels: European Parliament, 2005).

[150] Interview with the Diyarbakır Mayor, Osman Baydemir in *Radikal* 2006

funerals and in recent urban protests demanding an end to the incommunicado imprisonment of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan[151].

Another historical turning point was witnessed in Turkey in 2004 with the start of the fighting and bombing attacks by the PKK against the Turkish security units in the rural and the urban centers of the southeast. The PKK terror also targeted the civilians. Tension between the Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms restarted to climb with the Turkish public witnessing political conflict in the urban centers in the form of terrorist attacks against civilians and security units with anonymous perpetrators. In many occasions in western city centers, Turkish nationalists have attempted to lynch pro-Kurdish protesters. Southeastern Turkey has also witnessed mass violent protests and demonstrations of various politicized Kurdish groups and civilians on the eve of Turkey's EU negotiations.

One year after the restarting of the conflict, in August 2005, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a visit to Diyarbakır where the pro-Kurdish party had gathered close to half of the provincial votes (41.84%) in the last local elections while his party followed it as the second (30.79%). This was not a regular visit but a political act in search of some kind of reconciliation of the political and the armed conflict as well as local support for his pro-Islamist party. Such a gesture was extended especially to the pro-Kurdish political party controlling the provincial municipalities in the region[152] and its local constituency radically antagonistic towards the central state.

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[151] See for example, newspapers Radikal, Ulkede Özgür Gündem, 2004, 2005, 2006

[152] Though, Erdoğan's enthusiasm about the trip turned into a shock and intra-party tension when he did not find the local crowd he was expecting to see on the streets cheering for him and accused the local pro-Islamist party administrators for their inability to organize the local electorate of the Islamists. As Erdoğan's enthusiasm turned into a disappointment, the tension between the pro-Kurdish municipal mayor,

Erdoğan's motivations on the other hand were strongly associated with the party's commitment to the EU accession process that entered into a stalemate in the year 2004, rather than a sincere systematic political agenda to resolve the issue and/or a political program rooted in the party's internal dynamics. Erdoğan did not find the local enthusiasm in Diyarbakır that he was looking for. He instead faced a local resentment that revealed that political radicalism and polarization in the region could not be easily smoothed over.

Erdoğan's currently ruling pro-Islamist government is in fact ready to admit the misdeeds of the state 'in the past' since he and his party had been in conflict with the central state bureaucracy and army that have been the guarantors of the secular state structure since the foundation of the Republic. The pro-Islamist government is also willing to entertain the pro-Kurdish demands in terms of 'culture' and 'language'. However, pro-Kurdish politics are further in a quest to attain certain forms of decentralization that would give the Kurdish actors some form of 'self-determination' in the provinces in which they are in control as well as seats in the Turkish parliament that they never got to occupy due to the 10% national electoral threshold (stated publicly by pro-Kurdish actors in many occasions and also in my key informant interviews with the pro-Kurdish local municipality mayors as well as pro-Kurdish civil society representatives).

Pro-Islamists on the other hand, are in search of an institutional restructuring undermining the secular foundation of the Kemalist state and changing the civic

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Osman Baydemir, and the Prime Minister reached to a disturbing level as Erdoğan avoided meeting the Mayor Baydemir in person during his entire stay in Diyarbakır.

membership of the Turkish nation to a religious solidarity or Islamic community (see for example Atacan 2001, Duran 1998). Under this understanding, Pro-Islamists argue that the secular basis of the Republic of Turkey has suppressed the Islamic identity in Turkey and in turn antagonized the country's Kurdish population (see for example Yavuz 1998 for a discussion supporting this Islamist proposition and see Cizre-Sakallioğlu 1998 and Ercan-Argun 1999 for two excellent critical accounts invalidating the same Islamist proposition). Pro-Islamists are however, not willing to make any concessions that would jeopardize the territorial integrity and/or lead to institutionalized cleavages in ethnic terms.

Pro-Islamists are also not willing to welcome the PKK guerilla back to Turkey with 'their dignity respected' as demanded by the pro-Kurdish politics. Domestic and international development during the years 2004 and 2005, and Erdoğan's Diyarbakır trip that turned into a political humiliation on his part proved the intricacy of any further negotiation and rapprochement between the pro-Islamist and the pro-Kurdish actors. Most importantly in relation to the 2006 urban protests, political stalemate in the Kurdish question during those years indicated that the PKK militants would continue to fight an elusive war, while their counterparts in the city centers like Isa would be looking for different ways of making themselves a part of the Kurdish *mücadele* (struggle).

FROM GUERILLA WAR TO URBAN RADICALIZATION

Changing Visions, Changing Expectations

Today, more than two decades after the start of the armed conflict, Turkish state repression and the Kurdish insurgent violence continue to feed each other in a symbiotic relationship, in a vicious circle. With cessation of the armed conflict in the year 1999, there had emerged hopes for the depolarization of politics and for socio-political

reconciliation of the *Kurdish Question* in Turkey. The post 1999 period marked the pro-Kurdish party's coming to power in the local governments in many Southeastern provinces and also saw EU sponsored democratization reforms.

These were the heydays of pro-Kurdish politics and pro-Kurdish civil organizing in Southeastern Turkey with political opening enabling these pro-Kurdish actors to establish themselves as active and legitimate representatives of the Kurds in the region. As Gambetti (2005:53) points out "[t]he municipality became the engine force that opened new spaces of communication and expression, which not only fostered cultural life, but also allowed for new political publics to emerge." In a similar vein, Öktem in his 2005 study on Mardin a Southeastern province bordering Diyarbakır and located on the Turkish-Syrian border argued that urban spaces emerged 'as the site of negotiation' with the end of the armed conflict in 1999.

> While the large part of the territorial struggle of Kurdish insurgents was fought in the countryside, it is the urban space that emerges as the site of negotiation during the depolarization of politics, in the realm of symbols as well as in the everyday practice of its residents. (Öktem, 2005)

I however, aim to show that these early hopes and projections are too much optimistic about both supposedly opening democratic spaces in Turkey as well as about the ability of the pro-Kurdish actors to capitalize on democracy in a reconciliatory manner.

The pro-Kurdish political party (HADEP/DEHAP), considered as the legal extension of the PKK, came to the municipal government in several strategic southeastern provinces in 1999 and again in 2004, including Diyarbakır where 2006 violent urban protest events were initiated. The party's taking over municipal control indeed produced hopes within the liberal circles in Turkey that it would facilitate state-

citizen articulation in the region and set the basis for social and political reconciliation. The party with its local activities and civil society organizing on the one hand has functioned as a mediator between the pro-Kurdish movement and its grassroots constituency facilitating a better integration of the grassroots into the movement. Moreover, the pro-Kurdish actors have tried to maintain the delicate balance in their relations with the central state and their local constituency. While looking for spaces of communication where they can negotiate with the Turkish state, they have contributed to further politicization of their constituency through disseminating pro-Kurdish discourses centering around 'culture', 'language' and 'identity'.

International channels including the international human rights organizations and European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) have encouraged the organized pro-Kurdish groups to reach out to the grassroots and organize them to file cases against the Turkish state. International human rights discourses have turned into a bargaining power for thousands of Kurdish citizens to negotiate with the Turkish state in order to settle accounts of political violence in the form of displacement, torture and/or extra-judicial murders of family members. On the one hand, there are past accounts to be settled with the state including the wrongdoings of the state during the conflict years; on the other hand there are new concerns with the new circumstances including poverty and unemployment and new discourses internalized such as over human rights and cultural rights. Ordinary Kurdish citizens previously distant from the state circles have become involved in claim-making mechanisms. The urban centers to which the majority of the displaced Kurds moved turned into geographic catalysts for the ordinary civilians to mobilize and become 'political' and also 'radical.' Urban space has provided the political

space offering physical visibility, networks and communication as well as political opportunities to mobilize.

Processes of 'becoming political' are multifaceted and complicated. Pro-Kurdish and more radical pro-PKK discourses operationalize Kurdish population displacement by accentuating the centrality of the 'Kurdish homeland' in the 'Kurdish struggle'. These discourses incorporating international human rights, internally displaced people's rights (IDP rights) and (Kurdish) cultural rights discourses are welcome, reproduced and disseminated on the ground by various organized Kurdish groups ranging from pro-Kurdish CSOs to pro-Kurdish political parties with close ties with the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe as well as in the USA. The concepts of 'war', 'violence', 'bloodshed', 'oppression', and 'migration (*göç*)' that have stricken the 'Kurdish homeland' (or *Kurdistan*) are integrated into these discourses and used to maintain political sensitivity as well as political activism among the Kurdish masses.

Aras (2005) for example argues that pro-Kurdish groups including the pro-Kurdish political parties working at the municipal levels in Southeastern Turkey deliberately attempt to maintain the tension between the masses of Kurds and the Turkish state through politicization of the displaced populations. This is, he argues, a political survival strategy for pro-Kurdish politicians through discourses that touch the sensitivities of the people through using Kurdish culture, language and identity with which everybody could easily associate themselves. Although this argument has some validity, it underplays the delicate balance that organized Kurds have to maintain in their relations with the central state and their local constituency.

My impression in the field was that the attitudes of pro-Kurdish actors towards the Turkish state were by then not monolithic; and the pro-Kurdish political party,

DEHAP, as well as pro-Kurdish CSOs look for spaces of communication where they can negotiate with the Turkish state. On the other hand, the politicized Kurdish population obliges them to be decisive in their 'struggle' against the state and expects them not to make any concessions on the ideals of the Kurdish struggle and Kurdish demands. Within this web of local, national and international dynamics, urban spaces --such as the highly pro-Kurdish Diyarbakır and the more divided Van where pro-Islamists are strong enough to challenge the pro-Kurdish political party-- have emerged as geographies of politicized identities, where there are local and national political struggles for control and power that have international repercussions.

In the particular case of the displaced migrants, material demands and redistributive demands are articulated in ethnic identity terms, in other words they are seen as conditional to recognition of 'Kurdishness' and the 'Kurdish struggle' carried on by the PKK which they now ideologically follow and are tied via their *blood.* Interactions of the local populations at the civil society level also further contribute to the dissemination and strengthening of Kurdish 'identities'. Identity-related labels emerged, developed and were used among/by the pro-PKK Kurdish elite as well as organized pro-Kurdish groups, such as notions of 'yurtsever' and 'arkadaş' with ethnicized/politicized connotations. Yurtsever is a Turkish word that literally means the person loving his/her nation/land (here means Kurdish nation/land/people). In the pro-Kurdish/pro-PKK discourse, Yurt (nation/land) refers to Kurdish nation and transstate Kurdish lands, '*Kurdistan*'.

In my interviews, I observed people using 'yurtsever' often to call themselves or their fellows in terms of their commitment to the Kurdish identity and 'Kurdish struggle' (Mücadele). Arkadaş literally means 'friend' in Turkish. The group of Kurds referring to

one another as '*yurtsever*' call each other '*arkadaş*' added after their first names[153]. These labels have emerged in a context where elite-produced discourses have been welcome and reproduced by the local people's perception of their identity as the main reason for the oppression and violence that they have experienced. The dissemination of Kurdish identity and its politicization at the local level among the local communities through their PKK affiliations as well as via their encounters with pro-PKK civil organizing networks have also promoted solidarity through transnational bonds with the Kurds in other parts of Turkey, in Europe and in the other Middle East countries in which their fellow Kurds currently reside.

Politicization of Kurdish identity has been; however, exclusive. Being Kurdish has been associated with all the suffering, human rights violations, killings, disappearances and displacement. The ones who stayed back home and collaborated with the Turkish state and the security forces have been attributed a lesser 'Kurdish identity' not only by the victims of displacement and state violence, but also by the organized Kurdish groups, activists and pro-Kurdish/pro-PKK civil society. There has emerged an internal enmity between '*yurtsever*' Kurds who support the pro-Kurdish politics and sympathize with the PKK and the Kurds who refuse to challenge the mainstream Turkish politics and distance themselves from pro-Kurdish politics and the PKK.

Kurds considered state friendly include a wide range of people such as Kurdish politicians, businessmen and Kurdish intellectuals who take on a more moderate, critical and at times pragmatic stance in relation to politics, as well as rural tribal communities

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[153] Arkadaş has also a broader usage. They may call everybody sympathetic to the Kurdish people and the Kurdish struggle 'arkadaş'. I was also called 'Deniz Arkadaş' on many occasions as a form of expressing their trust and friendship for me.

and village guards who agreed to collaborate with the Turkish security forces against the PKK. They are labeled as the opprobrium of the imagined 'Kurdish nation', threats to 'Kurdish struggle', 'betrayers' who collaborated with the 'enemy', the 'non-humans' who failed to reason about what was right and what was wrong, and the 'immoral' who exchanged their souls and the cause of the Kurdish struggle for money, power and/or arms. Conflict-affected Kurdish communities that stayed back in rural areas have remained distant from the process of grassroots politicization associated with the organized Kurdish groups in the city centers. Rural communities, such as village guards fighting against the PKK got trapped in between their tribal leaders and the Turkish security forces. They have remained mute, marginalized by the pro-Kurdish politics and disregarded by the international human rights organizations if not identified as perpetrators of violence together with the Turkish state.

It has been argued within some scholarly circles that the emergence of identity politics in Turkey after the military coup (1980) was a resurgence of the previously repressed local (or peripheral) identities (Keyman 1998). I argue that it was in fact a redefinition of local identities within a new neo-liberal era with particular political economic forces encouraging ethnic and religious politicization and polarization around the world. It was also a result of the constantly changing specificities of the local, national and regional context of the armed conflict and political violence in Turkey. Kurdish identity politics further refers to the politicization of the traditional, local peripheral identities at their intersections with the processes of migration, disorganized urbanization, neo-liberalism and globalisation. In this respect, identity politics has less to do with Kurdish identity and more to do with the contingencies of how 'ethnicity' and

'ethnic identity' is defined and politicized as leverage in the making of particular demands and for political ends.

Current pro-Kurdish politics including the PKK's legal political and civil extensions in Turkey and in Diaspora, has an engagement with and/or quest for reinvigorating an imagined *authentic* Kurdish identity, that contingencies of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic identity' are defined and politicized as leverage in the making of particular demands and for political ends. In this respect, this politicization of identity process is the pro-Kurdish politics' demands to institutionalize 'ethnic' differences in Turkey to challenge the 'ethnic visage' of Turkish citizenship (Kirisci, 2000), ironically with ethnic(*ized*) demands that themselves are more likely to deepen the ethnic cleavages than to achieve social, economic and political integration of different ethnicities in Turkey. Politicization of Kurdish identity refers to attempts on the part of the pro-Kurdish politics to institutionalize 'ethnic' differences in Turkey. Politicization of Kurdish identity further entails demands on the side of the organized pro-Kurdish politics to institutionalize differences between southeastern Turkey and the rest of the country through a discursively defined form of self-determination. Kurdish identity, culture and language are in the center of these processes of identity politicization; and the poorest segments of the Kurdish migrants with peasant background constitute the grassroots base.

Engaging with the concepts of 'war', 'violence', 'bloodshed', 'oppression', 'Kurdish homeland/Kurdistan' and 'forced migration', and the demands for reviving and preserving 'Kurdish culture', 'language' and 'identity'; the party and the pro-Kurdish civil society organizing has deliberately maintained the tension between the masses of Kurds and the Turkish state as a political survival strategy. In this way, political activism among the grassroots has also been encouraged. Interactions of the local populations at

the civil society level have also further contributed to the dissemination and strengthening of a particular form of Kurdish identity associated with the PKK ideology. Certain labels with ethnicized/politicized connotations emerged to distinguish the friends and the foes; such as 'yurtsever' (lover of the [Kurdish] homeland).

The restarting of the fighting in June 2004 proved the vulnerability of peace in Southeastern Turkey. Pro-Kurdish political party's and its municipalities' continuous commitment to the PKK ideology have further increased the tension between the state including the Turkish military and the pro-Islamist government and the pro-Kurdish actors. In June 2004, PKK declared an end to the ceasefire and restarted its attacks against the Turkish security points when I was in the field in Diyarbakır. This was just several months before the EU decision over whether or not to start negotiations with Turkey for full membership. The organization's decision, in this respect, was strategic to put pressure on the Turkish state as well as the EU to take steps for political reconciliation with the PKK.

The fighting between the Turkish security forces and the PKK resumed in certain rural areas in southeastern Turkey, though the intensity of the fighting has been so far lesser than before and it is geographically limited. PKK also started to conduct hit and run attacks against Turkish security stations in several southeastern city centers, several of them happened during my stay in Diyarbakır. There have also been declarations of the PKK cadres being published in pro-PKK media, regarding the change in their guerilla war strategies, which they plan to move to urban centers and metropolitan areas in Western Turkey. Although, the organization targeted civilians in city centers including the tourist location in coastal Turkey many times during 1990s; starting from 2004 urban

centers have been specifically referred by the high-ranked PKK leaders as new places for future PKK activism (See for example Pro-PKK daily Yerel Gündem since 2004).

In a parallel vein, if this new era started with the imprisonment of the PKK leader, the organization's legal extensions in political and civil arena had already started to talk about new 'domains and spaces' of activism. In a local civil society assembly in the southeastern province of Diyarbakır on October 2004, one representative from a pro-Kurdish NGO (ORUP- a pseudonym) acknowledged that the forced migration of the Kurdish communities has been an integral part of the 'Kurdish struggle'. In fact, national and local civil society organizations concerned with forced population displacement, some of which are ideologically tied and sympathetic to the insurgent organization (PKK) have used 'Kurdish displacement' in their rhetoric and political discourses for a long time. In this particular occasion, however, the pro-PKK NGO representative addressed the difficulties of carrying out the armed conflict any further under the current regional and international conjecture and called for a united pro-Kurdish civil activism that would replace the armed 'struggle'.

> *Göç* [migration] has emerged as a consequence of our *mücadele* [Kurdish struggle]. It has also showed us some of our internal problems… Armed conflict has not been a solution, we realized that armed struggle be carried into the civil domain, as Öcalan [imprisoned leader of the PKK] calls it, the 3rd space (Fieldnotes, 16/10/2004, Civil Society Assembly organized by ORUP, Kurdish Institute, Diyarbakır)[154].

Ironically, pro-Kurdish/pro-PKK organizing has been recently using two contradictory strategies. On the one hand, pro-Kurdish actors have been replacing the discourse of independence (an independent Kurdish state) with rhetoric of 'Democratic

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[154] A brief headline about this pro-Kurdish 'civil society assembly' appeared in the national pro-Kurdish newspaper next day, see Ülkede Özgür Gündem, 17/10/2004.

Republic' in Turkey referring to 'Turkish-Kurdish solidarity under the roof of Turkey'. On the other hand, they have been subtly encouraging new forms of pro-Kurdish organizing and activism with discursive references to new forms of violence, ranging from violent urban attacks in 'Turkish cities' promoted by the PKK to peaceful urban protest activities organized by the pro-Kurdish civil society to attract international attention.

As top-down changes in the movement have not yet penetrated evenly into the grassroots, both pro-Kurdish politics and its local constituency seem perplexed about how to redefine the movement and its demands according to the changing domestic and international conjecture. Moreover, the consequences of the armed conflict and displacement are not easy to erase from the political memory of the displaced population. Firat's account reveals the differential impact of the transformations in the Kurdish movement on different ranks of the PKK organization and on the sympathizers and followers of the organization. His interview points out the gap between the Kurdish movement as an elite project pragmatically altering its discourse as a result of the declining leverage of the PKK in the guerilla war and changes in the national and international context, and the pro-Kurdish politicization at the grassroots level.

> We left Batman [a southeastern province neighboring Diyarbakır] in the year 1993. The cause was not directly the Turkish security, our problem was with Hezbullah. We were PKK sympathizers, they were against us. The state was also supporting them as a counter-guerilla strategy… My brother was murdered by a Hezbullah militant. After this, my entire family came here… Then I got arrested. I had been in prison for 7 seven years for PKK membership… The prisons are like PKK universities[155], we are all together in there. We read, learn and discuss about politics all the time… Today, we want new developments that can bring democratic openings in this country. We want our Kurdish identity to be protected under constitutional rights. We demand this for all the other people [different

[155] Prisons as spaces of political education

> ethnicities] living under the roof of Turkey too. We believe that democracy will resolve all our problems in terms of cultural rights, but also women's and children's rights…. It is not easy to explain this to my 60 year-old father. He still talks about an independent Kurdish state. He is not able to understand the changed conjecture; he is still stuck with the possibility of an impossible Kurdistan for Kurds in Turkey (Interview with Firat, 29 year-old, winter 2004, Diyarbakır).

Firat's father interrupted the interview at this point: "If we won't have our independent *Kurdistan*, then what the hell did you spend your 7 years in jail for and made your mother cry every single day during those years? Did she suffer for nothing? Did we suffer for nothing?" (Firat's interview notes, 2004 Diyarbakır). The stance of Firat's father in fact represents the feelings of many Kurds I interviewed. However, in general, the majority of the interviewees stands somewhere in between Firat and his father. In tens of interviews, the desire for an independent Kurdish state was discursively added to the accounts when the interviewees were asked about their major demands from the Turkish state and major expectations from the pro-Kurdish political party.

Yet, in those accounts, interviewees also admitted that an independent Kurdish state was 'just a desire in our hearts' and difficult to achieve. In fact, the recent mottos of pro-Kurdish discourses propagated by the PKK as well as the pro-Kurdish political party were incorporated by the interviewees into their accounts such as 'Democratic Republic under the roof of Turkey', 'Turkish-Kurdish brotherhood/sisterhood', 'peace for the guerilla, peace for the soldiers' etc. However, when the interviewees were asked how peace could be achieved, the answers were striking. The overwhelming majority of the displaced migrants still support the PKK and see the organization's violent acts against the Turkish state as well as against the pro-state Kurdish communities as legitimate acts to achieve 'justice', 'rights' and also 'peace'. In those interviews, Kurdish women and men, youth and elderly expressed their longing for 'peace' together with their willingness

to contribute further to the 'Kurdish struggle' by participating in and supporting the PKK guerilla activities. Meryem, a displaced woman in her 50s, ironically affiliated with the 'Kurdish Peace Mothers Initiative' states

> I think with such an attitude of the state, the war will never end. My son got killed in the fighting; now I am more than ready to send his daughter to the mountain to fight for peace! (Interview with Meryem, Diyarbakır, fall 2004)

Some displaced Kurdish youth, who were the children of the present and former PKK guerilla or rural militia, contradicting Firat's cautious and peaceful stance, stated that the 'struggle' should not have been limited to the mountains. Admitting the limited effectiveness of guerilla wars in the long run, those young people thought that the Kurdish resistance should have been carried into the metropolitan centers through various protest activities including violent tactics. The PKK violence was justified in the interviews with the counter-violence coming from the Turkish state and security forces, and internalized as a prerequisite for 'justice', the end of the years-long 'oppression' and gaining access to 'cultural rights'. Isa, whose father was disappeared by the Turkish security forces when he was 14 years-old and whose family got displaced in 1993 notes

> I am a member of the DEHAP youth branch and the liveshield initiative… We want a general amnesty for the PKK guerilla and want the Turkish army to end its operations against the PKK immediately. We are not scared to face the Turkish soldiers. We want to show that we are ready to sacrifice our bodies for peace… Our protests are very peaceful, but we keep getting detained then released, then detained again… Nowadays, Turkey goes through interesting times due to the EU negotiations… Turkey's EU membership would not change a lot for us. We want what we want! Turkey in the EU or not, we don't care… If peace cannot be established, if our rights are disregarded, we may get violent. *But this time we won't go to the mountains to join the guerilla; we will enter into the hearts of the Turkish cities.* [Emphasis added]
>
> (Interview with Isa, 26 year-old, Diyarbakır fall 2004)

Isa further notes;

> PKK is losing power and getting dissolved by groups detached from the organization after Apo's [Abdullah Öcalan] imprisonment. Now there are independent militant groups that are and will be more violent than the PKK in the rural and in the cities. PKK may want to pause the fighting, but those groups will not listen to anybody[156]. (Interview with Isa, 26 year-old, winter Diyarbakır 2004)

Despite democratic openings, Southeastern provincial centers still remain politically vulnerable as well as radical with local populations' expectations of peace, cultural rights and the presence of social problems such as poverty. It is dubious if we can still talk about a depolarization of politics in Southeastern Turkey after 1999 as Öktem (2005) argues above, since DEHAP/DTP's coming to the local governments in many provinces and democratic reforms such as the legalization of private education in Kurdish. The intricacy of the political dichotomy of pro-PKK vs. pro-state still seems to be too rigid to break down in the southeast. Public frustration growing with the increasing political tension after the restart of the fighting, news coming from the country side with regard to the violent clashes with causalities, and dead bodies of the PKK militants sent to their families, many of them now living in the city centers as forced migrants, shattered the hopes for peace and reinforced political polarization and local radicalism among the PKK sympathizers[157].

'Pawns of Terrorism out of Control!' 2006 Urban Riots in the Region

Southern Turkey, March 21 2005. Two Kurdish children of migrant families from Southeastern provinces, Diyarbakır and Mardin put fire to a Turkish flag during the

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[156] Bozarslan (2004) explains this situation as part of the 'privatized violence' recently emerging in the Middle East.

[157] On the other side of the picture, there is frustration among the general Turkish public caused by the increasing number of Turkish soldiers killed by the PKK guerilla since 1999. It is however, out of the scope of this dissertation to examine the increasing hatred against the PKK among the general Turkish public vis a vis the increasing pro-Kurdish contention in southeastern Turkey.

Newroz[158] celebrations in Mersin, an ethnically mixed Southern province with a considerable forced migrant Kurdish population. The event provoked enormous reaction from the elements of the Turkish state as well as Turkish nationalist groups who perceived it as the utmost threat to the premises of the unified Turkish nation. In a statement by the military, Kurdish citizens who were allegedly involved in what now was called a terrorist provocation were called Turkey's 'so-called citizens'. The Military declaration did not solely refer to the two children involved in the event, but rather targeted a specific group of citizens who did not have a legitimate status in the eyes of the Turkish army. The same controversial term was also adopted by a state university in Ankara that made a similar declaration to that of the army when denouncing the flag event.

For the first time in the history of Turkish Republic, a group of Turkish citizens were labeled as 'so-called' citizens whilst Turkish citizenship, until 1980s, had been committed towards embracing the Kurdish population in Turkey without any institutional discrimination based on ethnicity. The 'threat' that Turkey was symbolically facing on March 2005, came not from foreign enemies, but from its own 'so-called citizens' a term that took its place in official discourse. The furious army statement received considerable public reaction, forcing the army to readjust its statement in a more cautious manner. However, the problem of legitimacy between a group of citizens with Kurdish origin who happened to be conflict-affected migrant groups in city centers and certain elements of the Turkish state was already more than conspicuous. Years-long armed conflict and its socio-political consequences embodied in the processes of displacement of millions of

[158] Spring festival widely celebrated by Kurds in Turkey and Iraq

civilian Kurds in southeastern Turkey seemed having changed the articulation between the state and conflict-affected Kurdish masses, with repercussions in terms of citizenship and national identity.

On March 28, 2006, a week after the relatively peaceful 2006 Newroz celebrations under extreme security surveillance, in the city center of Diyarbakır, five thousand young Kurdish protestors clashed with Turkish police after the funeral of 4 of 14 PKK guerillas killed by the Turkish army in an ambush in the mountainous areas of the region. The timing was interesting in that two years after the last time the fighting restarted, the hopes that the PKK guerilla would be brought back 'with their dignity respected' had been shattering. The pro-Islamist government was stepping back from its first tendency to further steps to reconcile the 'Kurdish question' after its coming to the realization that concessions the government was ready to make in the areas of 'culture' and 'language' would not be enough to gain the hearts of the radically politicized segments of the pro-Kurdish movement, which sees the PKK violence legitimate and virtuous, demanding a special amnesty for the PKK guerilla and cadres.

Although state violence against civilians was prevailing in southeastern Turkey during 1990s, the PKK has been the accomplice of this armed violence that took the lives of 35,000 civilians (including Turks and Kurds) in southeastern Turkey; and the pro-Islamist government was not willing to make any concessions favoring the pro-PKK politics. Moreover, the year 2006 made obvious more than ever to the Turkish Kurds that the EU adventure was coming to an end, with no more hopes that the EU could be a point of leverage to put further pressure on the state for the Kurdish demands. But on the other hand, these mass protests could also be one of the few chances left to exploit to push the

Turkish government to take some concrete steps with regard to the issue as a gesture for the sake of the EU negotiations.

Agitated protestors grew into fifteen thousand people in the second day of a week-long rampage and threw stones and petrol bombs at the Turkish security forces, smashed the windows of police stations, banks, post offices, local shops and public buildings whilst the Turkish army moved combat vehicles and armored personnel to the region and responded to the protestors with tear gas and rubber bullets. Pro-Kurdish municipality mayors, especially that of Diyarbakır Osman Baydemir, refused to denounce the street violence; on the contrary, he expressed his sympathy for the guerillas killed and the protest participants in several occasions during the rampage[159]. In a national TV channel, Baydemir was shown kissing a masked rioter on the cheek and saying 'I congratulate you because of your courage'[160].

A legal investigation was also initiated for inciting violence and making pro-PKK propaganda about another pro-Kurdish party member who supposedly called the local people to join the protests during the guerilla funerals[161]. The pro-Kurdish media Including a Denmark-based pro-PKK television channel (Roj TV) broadcasted intensively about the riots praising the 'courage' of the young protestors. Together with the pro-Kurdish party representatives in the region, the TV channel was accused by the Turkish state authorities and security personnel of inciting and inflicting violence. In a chain reaction, the street battles spread to the neighboring provincial centers (and with less intensity to Istanbul) with thousands of Kurdish children and youth shouting pro-

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[159] see his statements in Radikal Daily, 31/03/2006
[160] see Turkish Daily News, 31/03/2006
[161] Radikal Daily, 31/03/2006

PKK (Kurdistan Labor's Party-the separatist Kurdish insurgent organization) slogans and attacking the Turkish security forces with stones and Molotov cocktails.

Interestingly enough, the Turkish security units acted in a 'prudent' manner and the events ended with relatively few causalities (16 deaths nationwide, at least 3 of them caused by the protestors) that could otherwise rise to a hundred as happened in the urban protests of 1992. The Diyarbakır Police Chief was reported as ordering the police 'not to fire at protestors unless absolutely necessary'[162]. State spokespersons stated that the Turkish state and the Turkish police 'would never be tricked by dirty games of the separatist forces' by acting violently and degrading the image of Turkey in front of the international community. A police spokesperson praised the security personnel's prudent approach towards the young protestors and stated that no effort 'to create a clash between the state and its citizens' would succeed[163]. Diyarbakır Bar Association however, claimed that the security forces had used excessive force against the young detainees (including many children).

Diyarbakır's state-appointed provincial governor, Efkan Ala, stated in the aftermath of the days-long rampage, that the majority of the protestors, predominately young people, were the children of the displaced migrants who were forced out of the rural communities in the 1990s during the armed conflict between the Turkish security forces and the PKK, and now live with unemployment and in poverty in city squatter settlements. The governor-- the local representative of the central state close to the pro-

[162] TDN, March 30 2006
[163] TDN, April 1 2006

Islamist AKP circles[164]-- wanted to call attention to the social and political processes of the armed conflict that radicalized the conflict-affected Kurds against the state, which refused to acknowledge responsibility for the forced village evacuations and human rights violations during the emergency rule period. The intention associated with his peroration was very likely to divert Turkish public attention from seeing those young protesters as criminals towards questioning the social and political consequences of the two decade long violence in the region in which those children had grown up. His remarks did not find their true resonance among the general Turkish public mainly unaware of the 'forced' nature of the village evacuations and/or perceiving the state actions in the region as legitimate strategies to protect the territorial unity of the country against separatist threats.

These days long protest events were therefore cast by the state, general Turkish media and public as an 'abrupt violent unrest' carried out by the 'pawns of terrorism'. On the third day of the rampage, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that 'no illegal acts will be tolerated' indicating that any form of negotiation with the protestors and/or the PKK was out of consideration. He also denied the wish of the pro-Kurdish political party representatives to have a meeting with him citing the pro-Kurdish party's reluctance to denounce the PKK violence and refusal to call the PKK a 'terrorist organization'. Those moments of the violent mass contention have not so far led to negotiation and/or further

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[164] Although the local governor of Diyarbakır, Efkan Ala, is a name close to the pro-Islamist AKP circles; he is very liked and respected by the people I interviewed and talked in Diyarbakır. Despite that many displaced Kurds and politicized Kurdish actors do not like the pro-Islamist AKP (Justice and Development Party), I heard only positive things about the local governor Ala whom people called 'a nice, honest, hardworking person', 'sensitive towards the local population', 'a good person with commonsense and understanding about the Kurdish question' etc.

articulation between the state and the protestors about the root causes of the protest and/or the demands that were voiced, though in a violent manner[165].

Indeed, besides various forms of pro-PKK demonstrations staged mostly in predominately Kurdish provincial centers but also in western Turkish cities, PKK guerilla funerals have become the major events of gathering and voicing the anti-state sentiments. The funerals display symbols such as the PKK colors and posters of Abdullah Öcalan- the imprisoned leader of the organization, and slogans praising the guerilla and demanding an end to the incommunicado imprisonment of the PKK leader. The contradiction in these protests has been the way of expressing the desire for *peace*, but not putting a distance to the discourse of war. The tendency in the protest activities to attribute almost religious/holy meanings/values to the PKK, the guerillas and the imprisoned leader of the organization not only limits the grassroots articulation of the problems to the symbolic boundaries of an almost 'mystical' Kurdish struggle that has no concrete social, economic and political articulation. It also further gathers antagonism from the rest of the Turkish society including Kurds opposed to the PKK who also

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[165] I would like to note here that I agree with the strand of scholarly work on political violence seeing violence as counterproductive for social and political reconciliation and democracy. But I also think that motives for violence are as important as the act of violence for political violence scholars to explore. I therefore would agree with Goringe's (2006: 119) statement, '[B]y seeing violence as instrumental (Arendt, 1970, p. 46) and expressive (Riches, 1986, p. 11) can we appreciate why people resort to violence and the meaning they invest in'. In a similar vein, I agree with Bozarslan's (2004: 4) statement in regard with problematic labeling of various forms of violence as 'terrorism', 'As a concept, terrorism is highly normative and, as such, it is of very poor analytical utility for the social sciences…The invocation of the term "terrorism" might allow us to express indignation or to reinforce our normative and ethical positions, but it does not help us understand the aims, motives, and minds of the people who have embraced violence.' Therefore, I avoid using the terms 'terrorist' and 'terrorism' in this dissertation unless they are used by the others referred to and quoted in the text. However, while trying to understand the motives of the use of violence on the side of the state as well as on the side of the PKK, I also try to maintain a critical and analytical stance in understanding violence, its meanings, and claims associated to it, and its repercussions and implications.

suffered the armed conflict in various differentiated ways (personal, familial, communal-social, economic, political).

CONCLUSION

Certain developments in Turkey have marked the changing social and political trajectories in Southeastern Turkey and in the Kurdish movement in the aftermath of the 1990s. First, there was a decline in political polarization with the sudden decline in the intensity of the armed conflict between the Turkish security forces and the PKK. Pro-Kurdish actors with legitimate political positions have taken the stage across Southeastern Turkey as municipal actors and civil society activists. The end of the emergency law in the region and the democratic reforms pushed by the European Union have provided a kind of political immunity for many pro-Kurdish actors to emerge as 'legitimate' spokespersons in the domestic and international arena on behalf of the Kurdish citizens of Turkey.

Secondly, PKK organizing has dissolved at the local level by giving way to various forms of - what Bozarslan (2004) calls- "privatized forms of violence". Young urban Kurds-forced rural-to-urban migrants of the conflict years- have also become disoriented after losing their faith in the guerilla war. My interviews with groups of these young people revealed that they are radically politicized and frustrated by the declining guerilla capability of the PKK. Many of them are affiliated with the pro-Kurdish political party and their protest repertoires move back and forth between the boundaries of 'legal' and 'illegal' actions since they do not mind opposing the police and the Turkish security forces, and even getting arrested.

Thirdly, identity-based movements including the pro-Kurdish and pro-Islamist movements have increased their efforts towards the end of 1990s to change the existing

power structure in the Turkish state. The declining power of the PKK guerilla movement did not discredit it in the eyes of its sympathizers. Rather, the organization channeled its radical political potential into different available political outlets. New socio-political developments in Turkey have even put further barriers between the central state and the marginalized social groups in which Kurds of Southeastern Turkey are predominately represented, including the increasing social and economic burden of neo-liberal politics, with increasing unemployment, poverty, and the evaporating social state and its already limited social safety nets.

The pro-Kurdish political party DEHAP despite its popularity among the Kurds in Southeastern Turkey was unable to beat the pro-Islamist AKP in many Southeastern provinces in the 2004 local government elections. The pro-Islamist AKP's coming to the power in the last national elections has also enabled the political domain to internalize political Islam. Political Islam finds channels, i.e. state institutions, media, political parties, capital, available to dictate and establish itself as part of the state structure. The pro-Kurdish movement, being excluded from the political system, finds itself divided in either radical, violent ethno-nationalist factions (ie. disoriented, sporadic violent acts) or trapped into the depoliticized discourses of human rights and socio-economic development in Southeastern Turkey. EU promoted human rights and development discourses have recently become a frustration for organized Kurds in Turkey due to these discourses' limited expression of Kurdish political demands for self-determination.

What is important for me at the end of the discussion in this chapter is the implications of these developments in terms of democracy, equality and social empowerment. In her study on political violence and human rights movement in Latin America, Jelin (2005:192) states

> The concerns about issues such as inclusion and the individual or collective character of demands emerge in a historical moment of change…The issue raised focus on how to contribute to the construction of democracy and equity. This includes institutional processes, concerns with equality and distribution, and social empowering processes.

My concern with the Turkish case is that the processes of democracy, equality, (re)distribution and social empowerment have been hampered by obstacles; some of the structural ones discussed in the preceding chapters and some of them are strongly associated with the nature of the Kurdish movement since 1980s and the grassroots' problematic affiliation with it since 1990s.

Social mobilizations that are over concerned with 'recognition' may in fact fail to achieve their goals by overemphasizing identity-based 'differences' in terms of culture and language. They carry the potential risk of depoliticizing and obscuring structural problems and inequalities in society (as Fraser, 1997 2003). In a similar vein, while in the 1960s and 1970s, various pro-Kurdish groups were welcome, integrated and accommodated within the circles of leftist politics, the Kurdish movement, including the Kurdish human rights movement after 1980s, has been unable to establish effective strategic alliances with social, political and intellectual factions in Turkish society.

The dilemma here is the question of how to accommodate 'differences' within the system while at the same time addressing the structural inequalities and injustice in society that crosscut ethnic divisions. In their use of human rights discourses and/or the rhetoric of cultural and linguistic rights, pro-Kurdish politicians have not yet achieved a sophisticated articulation of the 'Kurdish struggle' that would appeal to an international audience that has social, economic and political allegiances to the local Kurdish communities and to the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe. In this regard, pro-Kurdish politics and its articulation among the grassroots have not managed to go beyond the 'militant

particularism' a notion elaborated by Miller (2004), Swyngedouw (1997) and also Harvey (2000).

Internationalization of the PKK activities (based in Northern Iraq with complex networking across European countries) as well as the pro-Kurdish politics (including the Kurdish Diaspora in Europe, USA and Canada) also confuses the Turkish state responses to the Kurdish movement. Although it is eventually Turkish politics and the public within Turkey with which Turkey's Kurdish question should be negotiated and reconciled; the internationalized nature of the problem weakens the impact of the Kurdish movement in Turkey as well as the impact of the localized grassroots activities such as urban protests could otherwise have created on domestic politics. Transnational pro-Kurdish politics complicates the Turkish state's responses to the Kurdish question in a democratic manner, since pro-Kurdish demands are perceived as manipulated by the 'external powers' and considered as the wicked games of foreign countries to destabilize Turkey for regional political interests.

So far, neglected are politics to achieve social and political reconciliation in the region and/or negotiation in terms of rights and access to rights through well-functioning political, civic and judicial channels. Neglected are politics to socio-economically and politically empower the local Kurdish communities by encouraging civic consciousness in the region independent from radical Kurdish nationalism, partisanship and subservience to the ethnic boundary keepers. Neglected are also politics to create economic restructuring guaranteeing better channels of distribution and creating material resources and employment in Turkey with particular attention to the southeast. Neither the Kurdish movement, nor the human rights movement, nor international-national negotiations to accommodate the displaced Kurds have displayed the political potential

and/or orientation to find a structural solution for the political violence and its consequences in Southeastern Turkey.

CONCLUSION

CAUGHT INTO THE SNARE OF VIOLENCE AND IDENTITY POLITICS

A QUEST FOR JUSTICE AND MORE BICYCLE

After spending six months in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir-- the city that is considered as the center of Kurdish mobilization in Turkey-- in 2004, I realized that my field work had left me with an invaluable amount of intellectual luggage that I was not exactly sure which way to carry. Developments in Turkey in general and in the southeast in particular in 2005 and 2006 clarified the framework that I had first planned as well as complicated the premises of my study. Throughout the writing process, I have had to incorporate the rapid domestic and regional changes that shed light on my subject matter as much as I could into my analysis. Considering the ever-changing nature of the Kurdish contention in Turkey throughout the history of the Republic, I have come to the realization that my fieldwork had occurred at the hub of the recent transformations in Turkey's new Kurdish contention after 1980s.

En masse population displacement has been the most striking element available in the recent manifestation of the Kurdish discontent and the new faces of the *Kurdish Question* in Turkey. From peaceful street protests and signature campaigns to aggressive and violent activism including urban rampages and demonstrations in the PKK guerilla funerals; from silently voiced ethno-nationalist sentiments to pro-PKK slogans on the streets; from human rights violation cases pending at ECtHR to urban poverty, hunger, street children, child prostitution; all of which I observed in the field among and around the displaced migrant Kurds during my research. Displacement of millions of Kurdish civilians in southeastern Turkey during the course of the armed conflict in 1980s and 1990s have indeed [re]defined the new face of Turkey's ever-

changing *Kurdish Question* with multi-faceted implications that were not possible to capture in their entirety.

This study calls for paradigmatic shifts in our understanding of the ethnic*ized* conflict in Turkey and its socio-economic and political repercussions in relation to the broader global trajectories defining the everyday experiences of Kurdish citizens (as well as Turkish) with violence, subjugation, poverty and injustice. An overarching goal has been to explain the changing nature of state-society articulation (and/or lack of articulation thereof) in relation to these newly emerged forms of social, economic and political insecurities under circumstances of political violence, identity politics, increasing salience of the local governments and the rapidly declining salience of the central state as a socio-economic safety guarantor in Turkey in general and in the southeast in particular following the neo-liberal restructuring starting from the 1980s. In a parallel vein, political insecurities have been mainly defined through violent encounters between the local communities and the Turkish armed forces that became the only embodiment of the Turkish state in the minds of many displaced Kurdish communities.

In presence of the conflicting processes evolving at the local and national level, I still think that the displacement of Kurdish citizens in southeastern Turkey could turn into a political opportunity. It can allow Turkish politics and civil society to reconsider the premises of Turkish citizenship and to consolidate state legitimacy in the eyes of the marginalized Kurdish citizens in southeastern Turkey. Finally displacement can lead to the emergence of political initiatives and democratic, independent civil society in search of justice for citizens oppressed by the recently *ethnicized* social, economic and political problems of Turkey.

In this concluding chapter, I reflect on the implications of the most important findings presented in this dissertation. Then I discuss directions for further studies of the state, citizenship and violence.

ARMED CONFLICT, DISPLACEMENT AND THE CHANGING PARAMETERS OF CITIZENSHIP IN TURKEY

The Turkish state was not the only violent actor in southeastern Turkey during the 1990s. Kurdish village guards who sided with the Turkish state also became the perpetrators of violence against the PKK supporters and the civilians in between. Traditional cleavages and enmities among the Kurdish tribes in the region have deepened and militarized. PKK also perpetrated its own violent tactics among the civilians. PKK victimized thousands of Kurds in the region blaming them for betraying the 'Kurdish cause'. Thousands of Turkish civil servants including the school teachers were killed by the PKK as well as thousands of Turkish soldiers (including many with Kurdish origin) and Kurdish village guards who sided with the Turkish army. The civilians victimized by the PKK have to a large extent remained silent and invisible in this study; not because they were neglected, but because they fall out side of the scope and the space/geography of this study. The civilians victimized by the state came to the fore as they were visible in urban poverty, concentrated in squatter houses of the city centers, actively engaged with the organized civil society, mobilized on the streets. And most importantly their peculiar position obliges the state to face up to the consequences of its actions in order to maintain legitimacy and a good face in the international arena.

The contentious stance of the civilians victimized by non-state actors such as the PKK still materialize in the form of Turkish nationalism and/or hatred against the PKK terror even among the Kurds; and at a more concrete level as overt or subtle

discrimination against the Kurdish citizens associated with that terror and with the separatist threat (which is a subject matter of another dissertation). The contentious stance of the civilians victimized by the state however directly engages with the state in demands for justice and rights, to reinstate what have been taken away by the state and/or to settle the accounts for the suffering caused by state actions. Politicized Kurdish discontent targets the state, challenges state legitimacy and makes claims in ethno-nationalist terms.[166] In the same vein, pro-Kurdish radicalization calls for institutional changes (including the institutionalization of the Kurdish language and culture), policy reforms (such as welcoming the PKK guerilla back to the country 'with their dignity and honor respected') and/or rearrangements of the state structure (allowing and encouraging decentralization, local self-determinacy and Kurdish ethno-nationalist party politics) as a means to insulate the Kurdish population from the state that is perceived as the perpetrator of the oppression and violence[167].

One important aspect of understanding Kurdish contention is to explicate its implications in terms of citizenship. I construe citizenship in relation to the exercise of state power over a territorially defined population and the legitimacy of this state authority. Through the dynamics of violence, the premises of Turkish citizenship have

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[166] This antagonism and ethnic politicization can not be generalized to the entire Kurdish population in Turkey. This is an important point that I have tried to make in this dissertation in order to argue that ethnic politicization is not only divisive between 'Turks' and 'Kurds' in Turkey, but further divisive among the Kurdish citizens of Turkey.

[167] While the general Turkish public tendency is to see the state violence as legitimate, general pro-Kurdish public tendency is to conceive the PKK violence as a quest for justice and rights. Neither polar side is able to see that violence is pervasive beyond the borders of the social and political entities that it originally targets. Armed conflict and violence also have the potential to create interest groups on each side that want to capitalize on the social, economic and political resources offered by a conflict environment. What is important and interesting here is to remember that violence coming from different power groups are symbiotically dependent on each other, not only feed each other but also need each other, complete each other, justify each other and earn their raison d'etre from each other.

been redefined by the state based on the notion of who was 'loyal' to a unified Turkey. These premises have also been redefined by the Kurdish citizens who experienced state violence within a political spectrum ranging from a demand for inclusion (as citizen members of the Turkish state) on the one end and skewed towards a feeling of exclusion and a demand for separation (as outsiders and/or victims) on the other end. Upon the arrest of the leader of PKK, the lifting of the regional emergency rule concomitantly with the democratization reforms undertaken by the central government created temporary hopes for depoliticization and the ending of the conflict. It was in this environment that the central government reevaluated the displacement issue as a 'social risk' to be reduced through social policy, socio-economic development and reconstruction in the southeast.

International encounters with the Turkish central government have opened political spaces for negotiation particularly using the language of human rights where issues of citizenship have recently come to the fore. These attempts have instigated policy formulations on the side of the government to address the socio-economic needs and legal demands of the conflict-affected Kurdish citizens. The language of rights seemed to be effective for demand-making to turn into policy to the extent that it articulates itself within the discourse of social rights, civil rights and justice for the citizens. Rights discourses with a call for ethnic, cultural and linguistic rights however, have been treated much more vigilantly by the Turkish government, and translated into various legal reforms mainly because of the sake of the EU accession process.

Although limited, new forms of articulation have emerged between the state and the displaced Kurds based on social rights and the reconstruction of livelihoods in the conflict areas, which seems like a last chance to restore the state-society relationship in southeast Turkey. However, it is difficult to imagine how and to what extent the state

initiatives to tame a socio-politically unstable population will be enough to satisfy more radical demands for the institutionalization of the Kurdish identity, language and culture.

CONTROVERSIAL IMPLICATIONS OF IDENTITY POLITICS FOR EXPANDING CITIZENSHIP

> Jean-Francois Bayart is right to advise us not to be fooled or naïve when confronted with the "search for identity," in which identity is often merely a resource manipulated for political ends (Wieviorka 2003: 132)

> In no case do we see the kind of inherent conflict between ethnic groups that seems to be assumed by journalists and the public. Although media depictions have tended both to glamorize and to demonize the worldwide upsurge in ethnic identity, ethnicity in this context is merely one criterion for organizing competition in a society. In different contexts, competition is organized equally well by other criteria, such as class or religion. (Tainter 2003:72)

Indeed, 'Turkish identity' was originally formulated by the *Kemalist* founding elite to embrace ethnic cosmopolitanism in Turkey without privileging one ethnic group over the other. The idea was a 'state-nation' formulation for Turkey under a top down conceptualization of "Turkishness" open to all distinct ethnicities living in the Turkish state territory. Ethnic minorities (other than the religious minorities) have not been officially recognized due to the initial commitment of the Republic to the civic notion of citizenship, similar to the French case (see for example Ercan-Argun 1999).

Despite the state bias favoring Turkish ethnicity in conceiving of "Turkishness" and the ambiguities and contradictions in law (Yegen 1999), the definition of "Turkishness" has been primarily based on citizenship rather than race and ethnicity. Kurds have always been welcome in public life and politics, and able to achieve any public and political status as long as they do not assert their ethnic identity distinct from their officially granted "Turkishness." Politicization of Kurdish identity and culture, on the other hand, largely occurred towards the end of the 1980s as the class-based politics

that accommodated politicized Kurds during the 1960s and 1970s started to lose their salience in the face of precipitate militarization of the state attitude towards the 'suspicious' civilian Kurdish masses.

Ercan-Argun (1999) for example argues that citizenship consolidation as a liberal democratic process has not yet been completed in the case of Turkey. As a response to the advocates of ethnic group rights, she suggests that the redefinition of state-society relations in terms of universal citizenship rights (as originally intended by the founding Kemalist elite in the first place)- instead of group rights, ethnic self-determination and/or decentralization- would help to tackle the Kurdish question in Turkey. Although, I agree with Ercan-Argun that institutionalization of ethnic differences would further destabilize societal relations and politics in Turkey, I am also convinced that consolidating citizenship on the basis of civic notions is not easy in practice considering the more than a decade long mass political violence in southeastern Turkey that has changed even the nature of the traditionally stable, established state-society relations in the region[168].

I should note that displaced Kurds' demands and claims are heterogeneous, in certain cases aiming to push the boundaries of the membership to the Turkish state to get themselves included and seen as legitimate members of the nation-state, in some other cases aiming to assert their distinctiveness to be considered 'different', but still legitimate members with rights over the Turkish polity, and in other cases aiming to affirm their complete separateness from the Turkish nation and society altogether. However, the penetration of ethno-nationalist politicization has been endemic among the most marginalized vulnerable Kurdish communities particularly in southeastern urban city

centers such as Diyarbakir where the organized Kurdish elite is most effective. This form of radical politicization does not only endanger the prospects of political integration of these Kurdish citizens into a civic notion of citizenship, but it also further hinders any form of demand making articulated in social terms and/or in terms of social democracy, rule of law, social equity, anything but rabid ethno-political claims. A particular group of Kurdish citizens has been positioned by the hands of the Kurdish nationalist elite and ironically of the Turkish state in a militantly antagonistic stance towards the Turkish state.

As Beber (2004) eloquently explains, ethnicized conflicts have the potential of "empowering "boundary keepers" that enforce divisions between ethnic groups and by not empowering individuals to be able to choose more freely, the likelihood of violent conflict may actually increase." In the Turkish case, not only pro-Kurdish politics but also the state (both civil and military actors) itself has functioned as a "boundary keeper" throughout the conflict distinguishing between the 'suspicious' Kurds and the 'loyal' ones. The Turkish state has contributed to ethnic radicalism among the Kurdish grassroots by failing to protect and insulate the civilian Kurds from radical Kurdish politics and socially, economically and politically integrate them into the safe non-conflict areas. Tainter (2003:72) further notes "[w]e are presented here with a dilemma. States are often inhibited in their cohesion by ethnic differences, but in many cases, ethnic distinctions are a product of, or are reinforced by, states."

In a vicious circle, 1) ethnicization of political violence feeds the upsurge of

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[168] Here, I mainly refer to the increasingly militarized nature of the relationship between the central state and Turkish army and the pro-state (and/or anti-PKK) Kurdish tribes in the southeast.

radical politicization on the ground particularly among the most socio-economically vulnerable groups of people 2) pro-Kurdish politics turn into a politics of ethnic 'boundary keeping' with Kurdish identity, culture and language at the center of the recognition claims despite the EU-sponsored democratization reforms granting substantial freedom and space for practicing Kurdish culture, identity and language and 3) the central government, the state bureaucracy and the Turkish army become more and more resistant to incorporating pro-Kurdish politics into the Turkish polity.

The dilemma is indeed beyond *how* to (re)consolidate universal citizenship rights in Turkey. It is also *how* to reconcile the contention between the state and the Kurdish citizens affected by the conflict especially considering the organic ties with the PKK and wide-spread sympathy for the organization among the Kurdish masses, *how* to (re)establish trust relations between the state and the 'suspicious' and/or 'so-called' (Kurdish) citizens, *how* to settle the accounts of human rights violations committed by the state on the side of the Kurdish citizens and the acts of 'betrayal' committed by the Kurdish citizens on the side of the state. The dilemma is also further about *how* to reconstruct the lives of the displaced citizens, accommodate them socio-economically and ensure their socio-economic security.

Finally, the real dilemma is about *how* to achieve all of these by reassuring and without exasperating the general Turkish population that wants the state to ensure democracy, rule of law, justice and equity for everybody in Turkey. This population has experienced the armed conflict in their lives directly or indirectly in the forms of political corruption, mafiazation within the state, political oppression, political favoritism, economic deterioration, urban poverty, deteriorating social equity, million dollars channeled from their meager pockets to the national security, and the thousands of

soldiers killed by the PKK guerilla and the PKK terror attacks on civilians all across the country in the 1990s. Leaving aside the declining state legitimacy in the eyes of the Kurds in Turkey, the swift rise of the pro-Islamist politics in the 1990s heretofore has been a repercussion of the declining state legitimacy in the eyes of the general Turkish public (see for example Onis 2000, 2003 and Cizre-Sakallioglu and Yeldan 2000 for this last point).

One of the most serious predicaments for redefining Turkish citizenship is the lack of state legitimacy on the part of the Kurdish citizens. Ferguson (2003: 29) explains this in terms of the effect of the violence experienced in creating socio-political vulnerabilities, insecurities and fears.

> …promotion of such fear is one of the best documented roles for ethnic entrepreneurs (Kaufman 1997: 167-170). Still, where lived experience, current conditions and relentless propaganda lead people at the grass roots to conclude that old authorities will not protect them, and that others who have victimized them in the past may be doing it again soon, there will be a strong tendency to fall back into local networks- of kinship, clientage, neighborhood, faction, sect, etc.- and get ready to fight (Ferguson 2003:29).

This is the point where identity politics based on ethnicity is not only something about claim-making for 'recognition' by and 'inclusion' into a nation-state unity and/or the definition of citizenship. Rather ethnic identity politics may work just in the opposite direction challenging the civic notion of citizenship rendering it obsolete if not dangerous for identities, rather than relating to the notion of civic citizenship. The state ceases to be a focal point to articulate with in peaceful terms for negotiation and reconciliation. More complication is introduced into the picture by realizing that ethnic identities are actually political constructions excluding sometimes the ethnic fellows who do not wish to embrace ethnic politics; the Kurds who are considered betrayers by the pro-Kurdish

actors since they do not embrace the PKK ideology and/or the pro-Kurdish cause are the case in this point.

An important contradiction involved in the newly developing trajectory of the Kurdish issue in the 1990s is the internationalization of the multiple faces of the *Kurdish Question*. My focus in this regard is particularly the role of the human rights language in the processes of encounters between the Turkish government and the international actors whenever the displacement of the Kurdish population is concerned[169]. Indeed, mutual reinforcement between identity politics and human rights discourses has antagonized the Turkish state against the pro-Kurdish civil society and actors whilst trapping the pro-Kurdish mobilization within the boundaries of ethnicity and demands for cultural rights.

Democratization reforms induced by Turkey's elusive European Union accession process have also introduced peculiar dynamics in the redefinition of the Kurdish question. Human rights discourses have been embraced by the pro-Kurdish actors including the Diaspora and helped to internationalize the human rights violations committed by the Turkish state and army including the village evacuations. While, pro-Kurdish politics has always successfully capitalized on the international human rights discourses, they have also been disappointed by the pragmatic approach of EU in defining the Kurdish question mainly within the human rights perspective, which according to the pro-Kurdish agenda constrains and disregards the broader Kurdish ethno-political demands (EU-Turkey Civic Commission 2005).

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[169] Rights discourses have had contradictory implications. International discourses drawing upon human and cultural rights discourses have further implications in terms of 'self-determination', an issue that is recently discursively mentioned by EU actors in their media statements rather than at an intergovernmental level. This additional complication is however beyond the scope of this dissertation to address.

Particularly the concept of minority rights has caused a controversial debate on whether or not the Kurds in Turkey constitute a minority group. Not only the Turkish state and the integrated segments of the Kurdish population, but also pro-Kurdish actors did not like the notion of 'minority'. The Turkish state on the one hand has been resistant to the idea of officially acknowledging the ethnic diversity among the Muslim population of the country. On the other hand, pro-Kurdish actors have been irritated by the idea of 'reducing' the Kurdish population in Turkey to a 'minority entity' which would contradict with their political agendas casting the Kurdish population as a 'nation' and/or 'the main constituency of Turkey together with Turks'. Kurdish ethno-nationalism, using the language of 'democracy' has pragmatically shifted its focus back and forth between the territorially concerned separatist and/or federalist claims to socio-politically exclusionary ethnicist demands leaving the non-Kurdish (and non-Turkish) ethnic composition of Turkey out of their political agenda.

Rights discourses attached to the democratization reforms have confused the Turkish state (particularly the central bureaucracy and the army) about how to 'get democratized' without empowering the challenging societal and political forces, especially the pro-Islamist and pro-Kurdish factions deriving their power from the discourses of rights and liberties. Rights discourses have contributed to the state perception in conceiving the Kurdish question as a divisive ethno-political demand that may be justified in the international arena using the rights discourses. On the side of the pro-Kurdish actors and the local Kurds affected by the political violence, rights discourses have contributed to their self-perception as a 'victimized' population. Both processes have worked as a factor of alienation between the state and the politicized

Kurds; rather than a factor of negotiation and/or reconciliation between the state and its citizens.

The concrete basis of the Kurdish question in the 1990s; including the issue of justice and also state and citizen legitimacy, and the problem of social equity, social citizenship, integration and cohesion have been overshadowed by the international involvement mainly around a counter-productive discourse of "human rights" and "minority rights". The political concerns of the state have tended to ignore and/or criminalize one of the most vulnerable segments of the general Turkish population (i.e. the displaced Kurds) whilst the political interests of the pro-Kurdish actors including the pro-Kurdish civil society have tended to victimize and romanticize these people and their background and identity. Even academic discussion and debate on citizenship in Turkey has been trapped in a parallel vein by the terms of 'identities' (Kurdish as well as Islamist in the same vein) and not been able to advance beyond how to accommodate them, how to co-opt them and/or to what extent give them space for practice in public and politics. Issues of social citizenship, justice and rule of law, political and social empowerment and representation, social equity and distributive justice have been largely missing in the literature on citizenship in Turkey (see for example Keyman and Icduygu 2003 Yegen, 2004 Kirisci 2000 among the other work that appear in the international social science index).

In addition to this general picture, recent developments in Northern Iraq have turned into a hope for the marginalized, dissident local Kurdish population in southeastern Turkey who-during my stay in Diyarbakir- were not hesitant to express their praise and sympathy for the Iraqi Kurdish leaders, particularly for Mesut Barzani. If there was even a meager realistic possibility for Turkey to be a member of EU, ethnic

crystallization and politicization in the country might have been dissolved; on the one hand the Turkish state would have less fear of national disintegration; on the other hand, pro-Kurdish actors at the elite level and at the grassroots could have been more willing to condemn the PKK activities and remain socially, economically and politically integrated into Turkish politics and society[170].

POVERTY, POLITICS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In this dissertation, I have shown that previous socio-economic insecurities of the displaced Kurds have been reinforced as rural subsistence survivals got destroyed and urban centers in southeastern Turkey turned into places characterized by the miseries of over-urbanization and/or urban ruralization with neither urban nor rural jobs and/or socio-economic survival mechanisms to depend on.

This dissertation has further pointed out that displacement is a political process in itself and a socio-economic transformation with a spill over impact beyond the displaced population and beyond the conflict areas. Different than previous social, economic and political insecurities, the course of displacement and its aftermath introduced new forms of socio-economic and political *insecurities* that have been experienced by the Kurdish migrant communities affected by the conflict. Previous entrenched socio-economic and political insecurities have been (re)articulated under the context and forces of mass violence and uprootedness; and later on intertwined with further insecurities arising from social and economic transformation of the urban centers. Among those citizens living in

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[170] The results of the recent July 22 2007 general elections evinced an interestingly evident shift among the pro-Kurdish electorate from the pro-Kurdish DEHAP/DTP to pro-Islamist AKP. However, pro-Kurdish DTP still managed to enter the parliament with 17 representatives. For the first time in the modern Turkish history, ethnic politics will be represented in the parliament, which refers to countless possibilities in the future trajectory of the *Kurdish Question* in Turkey. Whether this development leads to a democratic reconciliatory process or to further ethnicized agitation in public and politics is yet to be seen.

social, economic and political insecurity; poverty, unemployment and hunger are blamed upon the Turkish state's discrimination against the Kurds. People's demands reiterate the pro-Kurdish political mottos claiming cultural and linguistic accommodations as if these were the only solutions for the problem(s) of poverty and unemployment in southeastern cities like Diyarbakir[171]. Pro-Kurdish local government actors have also been catalysts in perpetuating an *ethnicized* discourse of poverty.

Indeed, the armed conflict and forced migrations of the Kurdish communities in the 1990s coincided with the processes of economic globalization and liberalization, market economy, changing urban labor and housing markets as well as the declining salience of the traditional social state and weakening traditional social safety nets. The increasing urban poverty and unemployment concomitantly with the declining social equity has been endemic in Turkey in the 1990s. Displaced Kurdish communities have found themselves in deteriorating social and economic city centers both in western and eastern Turkey; and have further contributed to the urban poverty. To a large extent, displaced Kurdish communities are not able to deal with the new forms of urban poverty as opposed to the previous forms of rural poverty, which they had managed at least at a self-sufficiency level. The local governments on the ground have become imperative for the survival of the urban poor in the absence of a substantive central government welfare policy.

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[171] This point is relevant to Nancy Fraser's (Fraser 2003) conceptualization of the three main deficits with the 'recognition' movements, which I discuss in chapter 4 of this dissertation (p:19), "*the problem of reification* of the politically defined group identities, *the problem of displacement* in shifting the attention from redistribution to recognition and *the problem of misframing* the actual causes of poverty and underdevelopment in an era of ethnic tensions created by broader transnational trajectories."

The controversial outcome of decentralization has been the entrenchment of religious and ethnic identity politics among the local constituencies (as I discuss in chapter 4). Local governments and political party organizations on the ground (i.e. pro-Kurdish and pro-Islamist political parties) have capitalized on the socio-economic vulnerabilities of local constituents trying to establish new forms of clientelistic relations in exchange for social services and provisions, in face of the lack of effective welfare state. As presented in the Maps in Chapter 2, in the 2002 general elections and the 2004 local government elections Turkey was divided into three major zones; the provinces along the Aegean and Mediterranean coastal areas going to the secular party (CHP-Republican People's Party); the strongholds of the pro-Kurdish politics in southeastern Turkey going to the pro-Kurdish party (DEHAP-Democratic People's Party) and the rest of the country including many southeastern provinces going to the pro-Islamists (AKP-Justice and Development Party). In the recent 2007 general elections, DTP maintained its power in few provinces in southeastern Turkey while another political party outside the mainstream Turkish politics and antagonistic towards the central state bureaucracy and the Turkish army, the pro-Islamist AKP, gained a victory over the pro-Kurdish party in many other pre-dominantly Kurdish southeastern provinces. While pro-Kurdish MPs finally made their way to the Turkish Parliament for the first time in the Republican history, increasing support for the pro-Islamist AKP among the Kurds has evinced that the contention in southeastern Turkey may not be contained within ethno-nationalist discourses.

Together with the pro-Kurdish political party's (HADEP/DEHAP/DTP) coming to the municipal government in several strategic Southeastern provinces after the nation-wide democratic elections in 1999 and again in 2004, grassroots politicization among

Kurds has found new channels of expression and new forms of urban patronage relations between the pro-Kurdish political party and the Kurdish masses at the local level in southeastern Turkey. While the 'suspicious' geography was perceived as the rural areas by the Turkish army and civil politics during the peak days of the armed conflict, the displacement of politicized masses into city centers has changed the locus of concern from rural to urban. The displaced masses' integration with pro-Kurdish politics in southeastern Turkey has marked the city centers in southeastern Turkey as places of political tension between the civilians and the elements of the state (i.e. the army and the mainstream political parties[172])[173].

VIOLENCE AND ETHNIC COLLECTIVE ACTION

> Where the political conditions for dynamic response are established or reestablished such violence can equally well decline or disappear as a result of an institutional processing of the demands that it harbors. Some of these conditions depend on the actors themselves and in particular on their capacity to constitute themselves as subjects who are conscious of what a political or institutional overture can bring them. An excellent example of this is the "Zapatistas" of Chiapas, who have broken with the logic of guerilla movements and are anxious to obtain a democratic form of recognition that associates a respect for human rights and for their collective identity (Le Bot 1997). Other conditions depend on the capacity of political actors to impose, by conviction or by pressure, a system of exchange of views, negotiation and discussion. This would enable the protagonists of violence to learn how to replace violence by a relationship involving communication, even if tense and conflictual. The decline of violence often depends on a conjunction of factors. Some are specific to the actors, who must be capable of being subjects and of giving up behavior based on pure hatred. Others are specific to the system within which the action develops and to the power of significant actors within the system (Wieviorka 2003 136).

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[172] Therefore, anti-system parties such as the pro-Kurdish parties and the pro-Islamist AKP have emerged as the major actors in local politics in southeastern Turkey.

[173] Dynamics of politicization and mobilization have been different in western city centers where displaced communities are much more fragmented, disoriented and away from the reach of pro-Kurdish organizing. This actually explains the fact that majority of the conflict-induced Kurdish migrants have been mingled with the constituency of the pro-Islamists in western cities like Istanbul. However, this dissertation has focused on southeastern Turkey; therefore displaced Kurds in western provincial centers are out of the scope of this dissertation. Relevant comparisons, though, have been done in throughout the dissertation based on my own research findings vis a vis the research done on western provinces.

Displacement brought the uprooted Kurdish citizens from geographically distant, politically isolated and undeveloped 'rural' into the city centers making them geographically and socio-politically 'visible' and more able to integrate into pro-Kurdish politics and civil society. In a sense, systematic displacement of Kurdish rural communities by the Turkish security forces has backfired and created new forms of politicization and mobilization in the southeast among and around the forced migrant Kurds. The Turkish state and military disappointedly realized this outcome more than two decades after the waves of forced migrants first started to accumulate in the politicized squatters of the urban centers.

Moreover, this study has shown that space/geography plays an important role in urban politics and economics. Urban space under a peculiar geopolitics shapes the nature of experiences, problems, perceptions and expectations of a contentious local people, and also manifestations of local demand and claim-making. In the particular case of southeastern Turkey, space/geography therefore provides the context in which political contention between the Turkish state and (Kurdish) citizens is being continuously [re]defined. Political arrangements and the local power dynamics in the southeast function as a catalyst for example, for the pro-Kurdish identity politics to exploit and transform the previous and recent social, economic and political insecurities into local support and to consolidate local constituency throughout time.

Endemic Turkish army operations against the civilian communities stopped by the end of the 1990s. The lifting of the emergency rule compelled a return to the rule of law and the restoration of democratic spaces in southeastern Turkey. However, Turkish security forces and the armed personnel are still visible in the rural areas and even in the city centers recalling a still continuing *de facto* military system occupying civil life in the

region which scares and irritates not only the local population but also the strangers like myself. The Turkish state still continues to exist in the imagining of the millions of Kurdish children in the region as gun carrying security personnel wandering around the city which easily justifies the image of the armed guerilla and/or the violent urban juvenile rebel. The physical forms of state violence against the civilians might have declined substantively, but they still exist in different forms as evinced in 2005 when two Turkish soldiers (supposedly acting independently from their chain of command) were captured by the local people after throwing a bomb at a stationery store in the southeastern province of Hakkari, whose owner was allegedly a PKK-supporter.

And finally, in this dissertation, I have discussed the gradual integration of southeastern Turkey into the social, economic and political processes of globalization and 'Europeanization', which requires further research. The repercussions of globalization and 'Europeanization' are expected to unfold differently in a southeastern city center such as Diyarbakir and in a western city center such as Istanbul. The processes of globalization, internationalization and 'Europeanization' in southeastern Turkey have gained a real momentum after the 1999 with the lifting of the emergency rule in the region together with the democratization reforms following the official starting of the negotiations between EU and Turkey in 1999.

In 2004, during the visit of the EU enlargement commissioner Gunter Verhagen, the entire Diyarbakir city center was decorated by the pro-Kurdish municipality with posters stating that Diyarbakir was indeed ready to be a part of Europe and Turkey's EU accession was through the heart of Diyarbakir. In almost every household I visited people had something to say about EU referring to 'democracy', 'human rights' and 'the rights of the Kurds'. The pro-Kurdish civil society organizations were distributing booklets

informing the local people about their rights/ *our rights* brought by the lifting of the emergency rule and the restoration of the rule of law in the region following the EU accession process—including the statements that the security forces could not search homes and could not ask for IDs on the street without written authorization, could not detain on a whim etc.

University students, a majority of them with no employment prospects, were gathering in the cafes, continuously talking about politics and also visiting the internet cafes to chat with their *Arkadas*/friends on the other side of the border in Northern Iraq. One university student that I met in the Dicle University of Diyarbakir told me enthusiastically that he learnt a lot about the 'Kurdish culture' since he started to surf on the internet. But he was disappointed that he was not able to communicate well with the Iraqi Kurdish friends via chat rooms because 1) his mother tongue was Turkish despite being from a Kurdish family (which he explained as "My family has been assimilated") and trying to self-teach himself Kurdish 2) Turkish Kurds and Iraqi Kurds speak two considerably different Kurdish dialects.

Moreover, southeastern Turkey is also becoming a part of the global consumption culture. Young people in Diyarbakir go to the shopping centers, sometimes just to watch and wander around even if they cannot afford to buy. Cellular phones are wide-spread among the young people as they are in the western Turkish city centers. The forms of global consumption, although limited, constitute sharp contrasts with the poor and socio-economically debilitated face of the city including literally thousands (about 30,000) of children working on the street as petty sellers and garbage collectors. Kurdish collective demands as well as collective actions are shaped under the nationally, internationally and globally defined local context in southeastern Turkey; and expected to be analytically

different than those of the Kurdish communities in western city centers who might be sharing the same socio-economic desperation but are not a part of the pro-Kurdish organizing, politicization and/or mobilization in the same way.

Contention and violence help us understand the structural deficiencies of Turkish citizenship and politics that led to the emergence of the ethnic(*ized*) conflict in the Southeast, and in turn to imagine better political structures that redefine relations between the state and society as well as between different social groups in society. As Unger et.al (2002:6) notes "what is required is an analysis of the relationship of politics and violence that can inform strategies for building equitable, pacific, and participatory democracies." The strategies formulated for conflict reconciliation should not, however, lead to deepening ethnic cleavages in Turkey (or anywhere else for that matter), failing to produce crosscutting social and political allegiances that would guarantee a well functioning rule of law and judiciary, social, economic and redistributive justice as well as social equity and citizen empowerment.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Why should anyone care about the displaced Kurds in Turkey? In this dissertation, I have brought up important issues that are relevant to the many other ethnically diverse societies around the world (including the western as well as the non-western world). Declining nation-state legitimacy in the eyes of citizens is not something unique to Turkey; neither are the ethnicized forms of contention and violence and/or increasing salience of the social and political agonies of neo-liberal globalization, decentralization and democratization. We are living in a peculiar era where different ethnic and religious groups are much more assertively seeking rights and aiming to change the definition of rights and citizenship as well as the social and political

arrangements within the state and civil society. Contentious politics is nothing new, but the nature of social and political contentions as well as their manifestations change. And especially in sociology we need a greater commitment to examine and understand the dynamics between the state, citizenship, ethnicity, justice and violence. Examining a socio-economically and politically vulnerable social group in relation to these issues, this dissertation opens up for me multiple research directions and possibilities for comparative analysis in the future.

APPENDIX

RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLE

In this appendix, I provide detailed information about the methods employed in this project, the research site, the sample and the ethical issues involved. The appendix is divided into four sections. The first section contains general information about the methods and sample, and the rationale behind them. Next I describe the research sites, sample details and migrant interviews. I then summarize the formal key informant interviews of this research. In the final section, I discuss ethical issues that came up over the course of this project.

General Information about Methods and Sample

I carried out the fieldwork for this study in Turkey between June 2004 and January 2005. I made a follow-up trip to Turkey in summer 2006 to discuss some of my findings with Turkish academicians and politicians in informal meetings, and to gather further information about the ongoing state and NGO research on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs as they are officially called) going on by the time being.

In order to understand the social and political processes of the armed conflict, I used a multiple-level research design. Since I was particularly interested in the dissemination of pro-Kurdish politics among the grassroots and in the forms of articulation between the state and the politicized Kurdish masses, I concentrated my interviews on forced migrants among whom grassroots mobilization and politicization against the state are widespread. My principal method was semi-structured, open-ended interviews, the majority of them conducted with the displaced Kurdish communities in Diyarbakır city center. Diyarbakır is the major provincial center in southeastern Turkey and the center of pro-Kurdish politics in Turkey. For reliability and validity purposes, a

lesser number of interviews were also conducted in the provincial center of a second major southeastern city, Van with a different social, economic and political composition- for the findings in the second place to be juxtaposed against the findings derived from the interviews conducted in Diyarbakır. Van is different from Diyarbakır in such that in addition to the strength of the pro-Kurdish politics and organizing in the province there is also considerable power of pro-Islamist political party competing with the pro-Kurdish politics effectively; as evinced in the last local government elections with the victory of the pro-Islamists against the pro-Kurdish political party. In Diyarbakır, in that respect, pro-Kurdish organization is much stronger and effective in reaching and mobilizing the grassroots. Van is also socio-economically more isolated and culturally traditional and closed in comparison to Diyarbakır that is the center of pro-Kurdish civil society and politics in Turkey with a relatively more complicated urban socio-economic system.

Interviews were conducted in the major migrant receiving neighborhoods in all local districts under the jurisdiction of the Diyarbakır metropolitan center. Interviewees were identified via my personal networks with the local NGOs, the local municipalities and the informal neighborhood commissions as well as through my personal efforts to reach out to displaced Kurds who were basically out of reach of the organized groups. These interviews may or may not represent the views of the entire displaced population. However, certain patterns presented in the data are enough to draw conclusions with regard to the trajectories of radical politicization, increasing marginalization and social exclusion experienced by the urban poor and the past and the present root causes of the declining legitimacy of the state in the eye of local Kurds.

I chose in-depth interviews as my principal method because I was interested in how conflict-affected Kurds perceive and articulate their own experiences with political

violence, their encounters with the state agencies and interactions with the organized Kurdish groups. I was interested in how these people perceive their own ability (and/or agency) to make changes, to engage with the local and national power holders to initiate change as well as their judgments about the limits of their agency. More importantly, I was interested in how these people interpret their needs, concerns, expectations, demands and rights, and how they imagine their future 'life projects' to secure material well-being, peace and political safety. More than half of the migrant interviews were conducted in Kurdish (in Kurmaji or Zazaic dialect) with the help of an interpreter. The rest were conducted in Kurdish and Turkish or only in Turkish. All migrant names have been changed in the dissertation for privacy purposes.

I also conducted in-depth interviews with a group of local and national key informants to investigate relations and channels of communication between the organizations with which the informants were associated and the state and the civil society on the one hand and the displaced groups of people on the ground on the other. My key informant interviews include the mayors of local municipalities (Diyarbakır and Van), representatives of NGOs (Diyarbakır, Van, Ankara and Istanbul), 'Socio-economic Development Program' officers in the GAP administration (Southeastern Development Project) (Diyarbakır, Urfa), one representative from Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce, representatives from the state' s "Social Services Provincial Administration"-Sosyal Hizmetler il Mudurlugu (Diyarbakır), UNDP and UNHCR representatives (Ankara), one Kurdish MP (member of Parliament) from Diyarbakır (Ankara) and lawyers (Diyarbakır, Istanbul) to assess the social, political, economic and legal consequences and implications of the conflict related population displacement. The key informant interviews were conducted in Turkish. Names of the key informants and their affiliation

can be found in the Appendix. Some of the key informant names are omitted and the names of their organizational affiliations have been replaced with pseudonyms upon informants' request or based on my discretion for privacy and security purposes.

In Diyarbakır and Van, I had a chance to meet and have informal talks with many people from various backgrounds including local, national and foreign journalists, people working for pro-Kurdish local news media, engineers and architects working in state agricultural development projects as well as in municipality projects, local and foreign social workers, village teachers, Kurdish writers and activists including a group of foreigners from Syria and Iraq. I also had meetings with several former PKK members who were at the time of the encounters officially or unofficially affiliated either with pro-Kurdish political party (DEHAP) or pro-Kurdish NGOs.

I also conducted participant observations in Diyarbakır and Van. This entailed attending NGO meetings, activities and seminars, attending weekly municipality neighborhood conventions, participating in cultural events and traveling with the key informants to learn about their activities and engagements with their local target groups. These observations were an integral part of this project because they enabled me to learn more about the internal dynamics in the NGOs that I interviewed and also the local dynamics between the organized pro-Kurdish groups and their constituency. Participant observation also allowed me to diversify my networks and to reach out to migrant communities with different characteristics.

Finally, I collected documents from the Turkish parliament, NGOS and political organizations and the local municipalities, as well as relevant issues of national newspapers (including the pro-Kurdish ones) between the years 2004 and 2006.

Research Site, Sample Details and Migrant Interviews

The impact of conflict-induced migration of the Kurdish population has been pervasive across Turkey including the western metropolises such as Istanbul, Izmir and Bursa; central Anatolian city centers such as Ankara; southern cities including Adana and Mersin; and of course all southeastern provinces. However, I decided to focus on the southeast Turkey for various reasons. My research interests and questions were beyond the urban consequences of population displacement per se. I was interested in the changing dynamics of Kurdish movement and its grassroots mobilization. I was further interested in political pro-Kurdish organizing and its gaining ground among the displaced Kurdish population. I wanted to position my analysis of population displacement within the broader context of violence, identity politics, changing state-(Kurdish) citizen relations and contingencies of the socio-politics of the southeastern Turkey since the start of the armed conflict in 1980s.

At the time that I started contemplating on my dissertation study, research on urban consequences of the conflict-induced Kurdish migration had already started in Istanbul. There was (and still is) almost no substantive academic study on (urban) politics and economics of Turkey's southeast region. This is why I turned my face to the region, with a focus on Diyarbakır the most populous province of the conflict-stricken Southeastern Turkey. A short trip to another important eastern city, Van, provided me with additional insights and reflections on my research questions. I also visited several other southeastern cities including Tunceli- north of Diyarbakır, where some of the most aggressive village evacuations happened in 1990s, Mardin- on the Syrian border- one of the major migrant-giving provinces in the region and Sanliurfa- on the Syrian border, the

center of the GAP project (Southeastern Anatolian Project), a relatively stable southeastern province outside of the major conflict zones.

The old city center of Diyarbakır is surrounded by historical city walls-according to the municipality sources the second longest after the Great Wall of China- that are currently accommodating a significant migrant population squeezed in between the labyrinth-like narrow streets inside the historical landmarks. I conducted 19 formal interviews with the self-defined forced migrants living in neighborhoods of the old city called *Suriçi* (Metropolitan sub-district). The total population of *Suriçi* constitutes about 16.8 percent of the total urban provincial population in Diyarbakır. Today, Diyarbakır provincial urban center spills over the historical city walls with gradually emerging shantytowns and slum areas spreading towards the outskirts as well as emerging middle class neighborhoods with modern, tall apartment buildings and complexes away from the crowds of the city center.

I conducted 39 formal interviews with residents of the neighborhoods in *Bağlar*, another Metropolitan subdistrict with-according to the municipality sources- largest amount of displaced migrant residents. In contrast to *Suriçi,* many neighborhoods under the jurisdiction of *Bağlar* sub-district are relatively new, emerged during 1980s and 1990s due to massive in-migration. According to 2000 census data, *Bağlar* population constitutes about 53.3 percent of the total provincial urban center population in Diyarbakır. I also conducted 25 formal interviews with the migrants residing in the neighborhoods of the third metropolitan sub-district in Diyarbakır, Yenişehir (literally means 'Newcity') that makes up about 30 percent of the provincial urban center population. I conducted 78 interviews in the neighborhoods (at the houses, municipality neighborhood service buildings and coffee houses) with the help of my diverse local

networks (including civil and political actors); 12 interviews in the local branch of a national Migrants' Association (Göç-Der, (Im)migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture). I conducted 34 interviews with women and 56 interviews with men.

I conducted 90 formal migrant interviews (34 women and 56 men) in Diyarbakır provincial city center.

I tried to have a meaningful balance of people in my interview sample based on these people's original place of residence: Districts of Diyarbakır and neighboring provinces

The census statistics I obtained from the ministry of interior affairs gave an idea about the district populations. I also took into account the information coming from previous research, NGO, IGO reports and my previous key informant interviews regarding the scope and severity of the armed conflict in Diyarbakır districts. Under the light of this information, I expected to have larger number of interviews with the people from conflict zones. Since Kurds from neighboring provinces live somehow marginalized from the social networks and/or they are less visible than the Kurds from Diyarbakır villages, I had to spend extra effort and time in each neighborhood to locate the families from different provinces.

I tried to have a meaningful balance of people in my interview sample based on the neighborhood and central districts (urban districts that the interviews conducted) where those people currently reside

I used the information on the current population of the urban districts in Diyarbakır to conduct a larger number of interviews in districts with larger population. I focused on the neighborhoods whose populations have been swollen during 1980s and

1990s or on the neighborhoods that emerged together with the migration during 1980s and 1990s. In order to identify the neighborhoods in each districts, I used information from a local mayor that I interviewed, together with a detailed urbanization report on Diyarbakır prepared by the TMMOB (Chamber of Turkish Engineers and Architectures Association) in 1998.

I tried to have a meaningful balance of people in terms of their socio-economic situation (or I should say level of poverty)

Poverty is widespread throughout Diyarbakır although the city has emerging suburban areas where socio-economically better off people move in rapidly. The neighborhoods that I studied were poor neighborhoods but still heterogeneous in terms of the level of poverty, quality of infrastructure and basic services available for the people such as social programs and public centers (Toplum Merkezi). I tried to reach neighborhoods with different characteristics where I found people with different levels of poverty. I also tried to reach families who managed to pull themselves out of poverty by managing to find a 'regular job' or starting up their own businesses, although these cases constituted a handful of interviews within my sample.

I also paid attention to one other factor in establishing my interview sample. I informed the people in my networks that I was interested in people with various amounts of land ownership, which I thought might have created differences in socio-economic well-being of the households in case they still have access to their land and be able to use it. Therefore, I tried to look for people with different characteristics of landownership such as "landless peasants"-they would work for others in their villages as well as they would go for seasonal jobs in cities, "small land owners"-they would work on their farm to meet their need for food, but they would also work in others farms and/or go to cities

for seasonal jobs to meet the need for cash, "medium landowners"- they would work on farm as a household and sometimes with relatives, but they would still have ties with city centers since they would go to urban markets to sell the excess crop, "large landowners who define themselves as 'Aga'"- they would have peasants working for them, they would do large scale agriculture, had/have access to credit etc.

In arranging interviews with the displaced households, I contacted certain groups of people including the mayors of the local districts, social workers, neighborhood headmen, NGO representatives and university student activists. I arranged some of my contacts in Diyarbakır, before going there, through NGOs and university professors in Istanbul and Ankara, who were familiar with Diyarbakır through their activities and research. The people I met in Diyarbakır helped me to reach more people who could help me especially on the ground with neighborhood interviews. In certain neighborhoods, it was the social workers working in municipality social projects who put me in contact with the families, in the others it was either the headmen, local people in neighborhood commissions (Mahalle Komisyonu) affiliated with NGOs and/or the local municipality or a group university student activists whom I met through a friend who himself was also a student activist and working for Amnesty International's local youth branch in Diyarbakır. This group of students when I met them, were preparing a voluntary education program- tutoring and social support activities for high school children. They had already started several tutoring classes in classrooms reserved by the provincial municipality for them. But they wanted to institutionalize and formalize their activities in order to secure long-lasting financial and logistic support through the provincial municipality. Interestingly, they would mainly target the children whose parents got involved in "the Kurdish struggle" (Mücadele) and got killed or were in prison. They

were familiar with many neighborhoods in Diyarbakır. After explaining to them that my research was on the "migrants" of 1980s and 1990s, they took me to the houses of 'migrants' where I conducted interviews with the families.

Therefore, throughout my stay in Diyarbakır, I was able to establish a broad range of networks in this province as well as the neighboring provinces that I visited with short trips. The people in my networks did not only help me to reach the displaced families, but also to establish trust relations with my interviewees. Without their presence, as an outsider, a single female, a Turk, I could not even imagine interviewing these many people asking questions that were often politically sensitive. In contrast to my expectations and previous concerns, not one single family refused to talk to me. They were helpful and willing to answer the questions. They were content that somebody was interested in their situation.

In order to minimize any biases regarding the definition of "forced migration", I asked the people within my networks to put me in contact with 'migrants' who came to Diyarbakır in 1980s and 1990s. My main concern was that I was afraid that I was going to be put in contact with certain characteristics of people based on who my mediator was. This was actually the case since my mediators put me in contact with the people in their closest reach, most of the time the people that they were already in contact. Therefore, I tried to keep my network diverse trying to meet people with different backgrounds and with different relations with the local communities in neighborhoods. The "formal interviews" were conducted with the households who reported their reason of migration as 'involuntary', 'by force', 'village evacuation', 'activities and abuses of security forces within the village', 'village and house destruction' and 'the PKK attacks to the village'.

In addition to the migrant interviews in Diyarbakır, I conducted twenty formal interviews in the city center of Van during my short trip to the province. My interviews were arranged by the local Van branch of Göç-Der and the local Van branch of the national Human Rights Foundation (IHD). Van is population vise smaller than Diyarbakır, more rural and culturally much more conservative than Diyarbakır. Tribal structures are much stronger in rural and urban areas of Van in comparison to Diyarbakır. The pro-Kurdish organizing in van is not as well-developed as it is in Diyarbakır. Despite that there is a significant pro-PKK population in Van, the PKK's legal extension in the party politics, pro-Kurdish party DEHAP, could not beat the power of pro-Islamists in Van. While provincial municipality was taken over by the pro-Islamist AKP, some district municipalities including Bostaniçi with a significantly large forced migrant population remained under the control of the pro-Kurdish party. I use my Van interviews and observations selectively in this dissertation in order to further illuminate certain patterns of political behavior among the displaced Kurdish population.

All migrant interviews were hand-written; none of them was audio taped in order to ensure privacy and security of the migrant participants of this study. All forced migrant and some local NGO names have been changed throughout the writing process again to protect anonymity and for security purposes. Some key informant names including the names of the local municipality mayors, government employees and national NGO representatives are kept original upon informants' permission. Again, all key informant interviews were hand written (not audio-taped) in order not to disturb the informants during the interview process considering the sensitivity of some of the questions asked.

Despite my earlier concerns regarding the security situation, police and gendarme surveillance over the local population in the southeastern provinces, my field work was

completed without any major tension with the local state authorities and the Turkish security forces. In contrary to my earlier expectations, I was welcome and very well treated by the state authorities and also Diyarbakır police forces. In several occasions, I was given rides by the local policemen to the city center from the state's water administration unit that hosted me for a while as their guest in their guest house. The local authorities were quite used to the visits from academicians, journalists and international human rights activists; and paying attention to not to agonize any visitors. I should also admit that 2004 was maybe the best year in recent times to conduct this research due to various reasons. Since 1999, things were normalizing in Diyarbakır and across the southeast. The PKK stopped the fighting and withdrew from the Turkish territory; its leader had been captured and put in a special prison-island. The EU process was progressing quite rapidly and the democratization reforms were promising for many Turks and Kurds willing to see the ethnicized conflict over. As Jonathon Sugden of the Human Rights Watch said to me in one of our email correspondence before I went to the field; 'there is [was] nothing to worry about doing research in the southeast anymore'.

The restarting of the fighting between the PKK and the Turkish security forces in June 2004 just couple of weeks after I entered the field; however, reintroduced some concerns. My fieldwork took place in such a peculiar atmosphere of contradictions- I was able to see how much 'normal' the things could get in the region and how easy everything could be toppled down. I was able to see how much hope for peace, dignity and reconciliation could be cultivated by the local people as well as to observe how these hopes could easily be postponed for vengeance under the disturbingly changing dynamics of local, national, regional and international conjecture. The year of 2004 was not a year of overly optimistic visions regarding the future of the Kurdish question in Turkey.

Between 1999 and 2004 many politicians, political analysts, journalists and academicians thought that the war was over and everything would get just better and better in the southeast. The developments in 2004 proved that the projections could not be that straightforward. The year of 2004 was then again not a year of malicious pessimism inscribed the region during the armed conflict and emergency regime years of 1990s. The year of 2004 was a year both in between these two extremes and beyond them. 2004 was a start of a new era in the region witnessing democracy (after the lifting of the emergency rule), instigating hopes and demands together with old and new forms of violence, identity-based politicization and protest activities.

Village Trip

I managed to visit only one village[174] where some of the villagers had returned permanently and some seasonally. The main reason that I had so many difficulties to visit rural areas was road destructions or unavailability of vehicle roads in the area. I was also warned by many people including some interviewees, that there was still security surveillance and small military operations conducted by the Turkish security forces and/or hit and run attacks by the PKK guerilla in the rural areas, which made me concerned about my security as well as my assistant's security. In the village I visited mid September, I talked with people in households and in groups in the only coffee house of the village to get information about the current socio-economic situation in the village,

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[174] Diyarbakır's Lice district (I prefer to keep the name of the village anonymous based on my discretion). The district of Lice was one of the centers with highest PKK activity not only within the provincial boundaries of Diyarbakır, but also within the entire southeastern region. Almost the entire district was destroyed by the Turkish security forces in the year 1992. Interestingly, two weeks before my village visit, then European Union Commissioner for Enlargement, Gunter Verheugen, visited another return village in Lice District, few kilometers away from the village I visited. In his statement regarding his impressions about the village he visited, Verheugen indicated to the Press that he was quite disturbed by the abject conditions in the village.

economic activities, problems with infrastructure and security issues. I conducted only one in-depth 'formal interview' with a household staying in Diyarbakır during the winter and fall and in the rural during the spring and summer.

Formal Key Informant Interviews/Correspondence

Jonathan Sugden, Human Rights Watch, Specialist on Turkey- email correspondence

Cengiz Çiftçi, Researcher, Specialist on Civil Society in Turkey and the Middle East- email correspondence

Erkan Özçelik, email correspondence

Interviews

Istanbul

Şefika Gürbüz, Director of Göç-Der ((Im)migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture)

Ruhşen Doğan, Lawyer, TOHAV (Foundation for Society and Legal Studies)

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Zeki Yüksel, IHD (Human Rights Foundation), Van Branch

Hanifi Eren, Project Director, TKV-Van (Development Foundation of Turkey) [Interview Conducted in Diyarbakır]

Diyarbakır

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Mahsuni Karaman, Lawyer, Diyarbakır Bar Association, Project Director for the Forced Migration Unit of the 'Justice for Everyone Project'.

İrfan Polat, Social Worker, did work on Street Children and their families,

Serdar Talay, Director, Göç-Der ((Im)migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture) Diyarbakır Branch,

Hacer Özdemir, Director, Selis Women's Organization,

Handan Coşkun, Director, DIKASUM, Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality Women's Center

Haydar İpek, Director, Sosyal Hizmetler Il Mudurlugu, Diyarbakır Social Services Administration,

Director of 450 Evler Public Center under the jurisdiction of the state's Social Services Administration,

Anonymous Informant, Journalist, Dicle News Agency (Dicle Haber Ajansi)

Anonymous Informant, Second Director, Local NGO, ASVWR- Association for Vulnerable Women's Rights- a pseudonym for privacy and security purposes

Anonymous Informant, Unofficial Director, Local NGO, ORUP – Organization for Urban Poor-a pseudonym for privacy and security purposes; previous PKK member; released after 23 years prison sentence

Anonymous Informant, Member of DEHAP Neighborhood Commission; previous PKK militia

Anonymous Informant, Member of DEHAP Neighborhood Commission

Anonymous Informant, Member of DEHAP, pro-Kurdish Activist

Anonymous Informant, DEHAP member, Unofficial Director of a local cultural center in a southeastern province; previous PKK member; released after 22 years prison sentence

Anonymous Informant, Agricultural Engineer, State's Water Administration (DSI), provided me with his work experiences in conflict zones during 1990s

Field Trip to several Diyarbakır provincial villages (outside of the conflict zones-no displaced population and no village guards) within the project site of the TKV with the expert team of the TKV (Development Foundation of Turkey)- 05 August 2004

Field Trip to the neighboring province Batman for a routine check in Batman Dam, irrigation sites and forestry sites with the expert team of the State's Water Administration (DSİ)- 15 July 2004

Ethical Concerns and Respondents Rights

Throughout my fieldwork and the writing process, there emerged several ethical concerns for me. There were certain imbalances especially between my migrant informants and myself that I had to deal diligently before and during the interview processes. I was an educated Turkish female from a middle class Turkish family from a western province, studying in the USA, doing research on conflict-affected Kurdish people in a socio-economically and politically most insecure position in Turkey. Stories of these people were unknown to many Turks (and also Kurds) living in 'my world' in Turkey. I was very clear to my informants about my identity, position and motivations for the research. All my migrant interviewees knew that I was Turkish (some thought that I might have been Kurdish). I felt the ethical responsibility to reveal my ethnicity at the beginning of each interview thinking that it was the only way to figure out if the migrant informant was comfortable with giving personal information to 'the other'. I told the informants that they had no obligation to talk to me and had the right not to answer the questions that they did not want to answer, to stop the interview whenever they wanted and let me know whenever they did not understand the questions.

Throughout time, I started to realize my own prejudices, biases and misconceptions about my informants. There was no given distinction in many Kurdish people's minds as Kurds vs. Turks; the distinction was rather in terms of (some) Kurds vs. the Turkish state. I can say that on most occasions, migrants were content that somebody was interested in their situation and that one was a Turk whose word could be taken more seriously by the state authorities than that of a Kurd. In some occasions, migrant informants made the distinction between 'good Turks' and 'bad Turks' and put me in the former category. In a key informant interview with a pro-Kurdish NGO

representative who served 23 years in prison based on his PKK membership, he commented "there should be no separation between Turks and Kurds. In 1960s, we used to struggle together [referring to the leftist student organizations]… I have had Turkish friends that I would not exchange for a million Kurds". Pro-Kurdish political actors and pro-Kurdish civil society representatives were very welcoming towards me and willing to share their opinions with me despite some of my questions being quite critical of the pro-Kurdish municipality activities and pro-Kurdish politics. They treated the interviews in a very professional manner as a kind of forum for them to make their points and critiques, and voice their demands in an academic research.

In a similar manner, my interviews with the state and government representatives were completed smoothly. On several occasions, though, the state and government-affiliated informants were upset with the terminology that I used (two informants refused to use the phrase 'village evacuation' arguing that Kurdish villagers were 'relocated' by the Turkish security forces in order to 'protect' them from the PKK terrorists). Again in another interview, the informant occupying a state office found one of my questions 'too much critical' of the Turkish state. Under these circumstances, I thought that it was my responsibility to make sure that the informants were clear about my position as an objective researcher with no affiliation and/or political sympathy neither towards the state and pro-state actors nor towards the PKK and pro-Kurdish actors.

Considering that the majority of my migrant informants were pro-PKK, I made it clear to all informants that I would be analyzing and evaluating the PKK activities and politics as I would also be assessing and criticizing the state activities and politics. This might have changed interpretation of events by some of the informants making them more assertive and/or defensive. My making it clear that I was not necessarily

sympathetic with the PKK might have introduced certain asymmetries into the information provided to me as the informants might have preferred to manipulate their stories to justify the PKK violence and condemn the state activities. Some informants might have also been selective in providing information. It was my discretion that it was much more important to ensure that the informants knew how the information they provided would be used than to extract information by concealing my stance.

No informants refused an interview. At the end of each interview, I asked the interviewee if he/she was content with the interview process and still willing for their input to be included in my research. They all agreed to collaborate. I believe that I was able to establish trust relations with my informants by making my identity, position and research clear, by assuring them that I was an independent and objective researcher trying to assess their social and economic situation as well as demands and political orientation. The local people who put me in contact with my migrant informants were also effective in me being able to minimize any misgivings that my informants would have had. My Kurdish assistant was also an important factor in enhancing my ability to establish trust relations with my migrant informants assuring the migrant informants that he had confidence in me that the information they provided would not be used in any way to harm them.

There were several occasions on which my migrant informants voiced their disappointment in me. On one occasion I was nicely scolded by a male migrant informant who thought that it was incomprehensible to him that I was doing research on Kurdish people but was not able to speak and/or understand Kurdish. In another occasion, one female migrant, who was affiliated with the 'Peace Mothers Initiative' of the PKK guerilla mothers, got agitated when I asked her if she was able to communicate in

Turkish. This was a routine question in my interview questionnaire to assess the command of Turkish that my Kurdish-speaking migrant informants had. She got furious and told me

> It is me who should ask *you* if *you* are able to communicate in *Kurdish*. You are doing research on Kurdish people, writing a book on us, but you don't know Kurdish. It is *you* who should be ashamed of not being able to speak Kurdish not me for not being able to speak Turkish… I would not speak to you in Turkish even if I was able to do so. I speak Kurdish, this is my language!

I was indeed not questioning 'how come' she was not able to speak Turkish, and I of course never thought that it was a 'shame' not to be able to speak Turkish. Considering the years-long state oppression on Kurdish language and the central importance of the Kurdish language in the recent Kurdish mobilization in Turkey, her reaction was quite understandable. In her eye, I was an educated Turkish woman 'questioning' her lack of command over Turkish, maybe 'reproaching' her for not having acquired Turkish yet and/or feeling sorry for her not being able to speak a 'superior' language. Until that point I had not realized the ubiquity of quite disturbing power imbalances between my informants and myself. She was actually definitely right that my lack of command of Kurdish (especially Kurmanji Kurdish widely spoken among Turkish Kurds) was a shortcoming in this research. Although, in certain cases, it was impossible to avoid those power imbalances between my migrant informants and myself, I tried to do my best to explain my research to my informants and to provide them with necessary information in cases that I felt they had misgivings about the interview process and the questions asked.

Respecting the rights and privacy of my migrant and key informants was a major concern for me. But there were contradictions involved. It was my decision that I would not reveal the real names of my migrant informants during the writing process. I told this to each migrant informant at the beginning and end of the interview. However, on some

occasions, migrants asked me to use their real names in my work. On one occasion, a male migrant asked me if it was possible for him to sign the interview notes and let me send them to 'Ankara' [meaning the Parliament].

> I want Ankara to hear what we say. They should not turn their back to us. I would like to put my name and signature under the interview notes and would like you to send these notes to Ankara for me…I am not afraid at all! I have already lost everything, I mean 'everything'; after this point, it is the 'TC' that will lose" (TC is the abbreviation for the "Republic of Turkey". Instead of saying "the state" or "Turkish government", especially politicized Kurds use the abbreviation with a negative connotation).

I told him that I could not send my interview notes to Ankara, but I would be happy to give him a copy of my (or his) interview notes and help him to write 'a letter' to be sent to one of the Diyarbakır MPs in the Parliament. I also told him that it was my principle not to reveal the identities of my migrant informants in my work and asked for his understanding. I used pseudonyms throughout this dissertation for all migrants I interviewed.

With the key informant interviews, I pursued a different strategy and gave my informants an option of revealing their identities. Five informants chose to appear anonymously. In the cases of three other informants, I chose to keep their identities anonymous considering certain sensitivities involved. It was my discretion to do so, while those three informants told me that they did not care if their identities were revealed.

Kurdish Assistant/Interpreter

There are two main dialects spoken by Kurds in Turkey: Kurmanji spoken widely, and Zazaic spoken by Zaza Kurds who represent an ethnic minority group within

Kurds[175]. Usually, Zazas that I met were able to speak more widely spoken Kurmanji, but Kurmanji speakers were not likely to speak Zazaic. In all migrant interviews, I had my Kurdish assistant/interpreter with me; though more than one third of the migrant interviews were conducted in Turkish. My assistant/interpreter was a Zaza Kurd and able to speak both Zazaic and Kurmanji fluently. He was a university student from Diyarbakır and familiar with the province very well. He was also extremely helpful for me with making contacts, following publications in Kurdish as well as surviving in an alien setting.

Reliability and Validity

The findings presented in this dissertation are reliable in a sense that I am able to explain to anyone interested what I did, when I did it, where I did it and why I did it. I put substantive effort in this appendix to make my activities as transparent as possible. I also think that the findings presented in this dissertation are valid. The migrant and key informant interviews support my discussions, my evaluations and my arguments in this dissertation. In this respect, they ascertained what I intended them to ascertain. I should however note that I utilized only a small part of the field data I gathered. Considering that the interviews were quite lengthy and detailed in all social, economic and political aspects of the course of the armed conflict; I was selective during the writing process to identify the segments of the data referring to my research questions and illuminating my hypothesis. I also have confidence that my informants provided me with the realities of their lives and experiences, and their true feelings and sincere opinions. My analysis

[175] Some Zazas I met in Diyarbakir refused their Kurdish identity evincing the complications involved in ethnic identity formation among the Kurds.

further draws upon a quite substantive secondary source of data; that helps me to better answer my research questions and to better support my discussions and arguments.

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